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[THE SILENCE OF THE DEAD.]

THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle
of Gold," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

Forth from those blue eyes
There spoke a wistful tenderness, a doubt
Whether to grieve or sleep, which innocence
Alone can wear. There had been a moaning
sound,
With which the babe would claim its mother's
ear,
Charming her even to tears.

The day had arrived when Eustace Villiers was
to try his boasted skill.

The father and daughter were alone together for
the last half-hour that was to be their own, their very
own, in which they could be all in all to each other
without the absolute right of a stranger to interfere
with their close union, their deep, intense love.

Irene nestled in her father's arms as if she were a
wounded bird seeking for shelter and warmth in the
parent's nest.

Sir Hugh gazed on her delicate loveliness with the
fondness of a parent, the yearning admiration, the
passionate anxiety of a lover.

"My darling, can you forgive me if I have been
too rash, if I have erred in my ungovernable eager-
ness to deliver you from your terrible affliction?
Irene, now that the hour has come it seems to me that
there are worse evils than blindness, as if I had better
have preserved my treasure in freedom for myself at
any cost rather than hazarded all that is now at stake.
Speak to me, my beloved child," he went on, pas-
sionately, pressing her to his bosom. "You must be
the heroine now, for I have a strange presentiment
of evil, a causeless terror, that fairly unnerves me for
what is now, alas, inevitable."

Irene could not see the workings of her father's
features, the almost unreasonable terror that was in
his eyes, the paleness of his cheeks, as he looked
down on her loved face, but she felt his heart beat
with violent, irregular pulsations against her cheek

as it lay on his bosom, and she knew by the tone of
his voice that he was striving to master a yet deeper
pain than he would confess to himself or to her.

The devoted love she felt for that tender father
gave her courage in spite of her fragile, weak-nerved
nature and her own hidden apprehensions.

She raised herself from his embrace and looked at
him almost as if there were sight and sense in her
beautiful eyes.

"Father," she said, firmly, "you have been the
very mainstay of my life, the sole comfort which has
reconciled me to the weary existence that has been
my portion. You have given your whole time and
strength and health and happiness to your poor, help-
less child, and if it should be as your over-tender
anxiety fears, if there are sorrow and treachery for us
in the future, yet I shall ever bless the devoted
parent who could sacrifice every feeling, every in-
stinct of pride and birth and all that is most dear for
my sake," she added, falteringly. "Darling, noble,
best of fathers, let there be no shadow between us
now. We are one, all one, in love and wishes and
hopes and fears."

Again she sank on his breast and twined her arms
around his bowed neck, and for a moment there was
silence, sweet, sad, yet blissful communion of souls in
that memorable hour.

Sir Hugh was the next to speak.

"There is one other point on which it will befit me
to speak ere we are interrupted, my child. You have
heard of, though in your girlish innocence perhaps
scarcely heeded the fortune that was bequeathed to
you by your mother's father conditional on my ap-
proval of your marriage on your coming of age.
That dowry I have had quietly and unknown to your
future husband settled on yourself. It will be in
your own control to will away as you choose, and, of
course, should the very worst betide, it will be at
once a means of self-defence and luxury for my dar-
ling and also an engine to be used at your pleasure
in after days. You understand, and will use this
power wisely, as I intend and wish, my child?"

"You have but to express a wish for my obedience

to insure it both in its letter and spirit, darling papa,"
she murmured, gently.

"It is well." Then he added, "As to the fortune
which I can bequeath to you I have made the
wisest provision in my power, Irene. The estates
will descend to your son, should Heaven bless you
with one, the personal property will be yours, and the
whole income free for your husband's use, while the
principal will descend to younger children, or to Eus-
tace Villiers himself in default of issue. Thus it ap-
pears to me that the arrangements should satisfy
your husband, and yet be prudent for you and yours.
It is the best compensation I can make if I have
erred in my consent to your marriage, my child. Ah,
if Victor—"

There was a sudden shiver in the slight form in his
arms, a bound in the languid heart which arrested his
words.

Then Irene's soft voice sounded almost hard and
toneless as she said, softly:

"Hush, hush, father; I would never willingly hear
or breathe his name more, only, should you ever see
him or speak to him again, tell him that I forgave
the coldness, the heartlessness that could leave me
without a word of sympathy or love; bid him forget
all but that I only gave him up to spare him pain
and the dishonour of discarding an afflicted and
helpless bride. You promise me this—you will at least
teach him to think of Irene with pity and tenderness,
my father?"

"He scarcely deserves it, but it shall be as you will;
you have but to look a desire and I will strive to
the utmost to accomplish it, and Heaven grant he to
whom I am about to confide your precious happiness
may be devoted and worthy of the trust."

"Amen," said a voice in the hushed silence, and
Eustace Villiers stood by the side of the pre-en-
grossed pair.

Sir Hugh started from the half-recumbent attitude,
though he did not relinquish his clasp of his fair,
clinging child.

"I did not perceive your entrance," he said, with
a half-suspicious look and tone.



"Perhaps not, my dear Sir Hugh. I was anxious not to startle my sweet Irene, so my steps were gentle and cautious, but I could not forbear from giving my hearty assent to the devout prayer that caught my ear as I approached. It will indeed be the very study of my life to preserve her from harm, to make her life a very fairy dream."

It would have been well nigh madness to doubt the fervent tone, the subdued glance, the soft smile that attended the assurance, and the baronet insensibly relaxed his grasp of his daughter to yield her up to her chosen betrothed, and Irene extended her white hand in mute acknowledgment of the vow thus pledged.

"I am ready," she said, "quite ready. It is for weal or woe—light or darkness, now. It is the last effort of my life to preserve her from harm, to make her life a very fairy dream."

Her tone had a tinge of bitterness in it, but there was little wonder when such fearful interests were at stake.

And Eustace calmly began his preparations for the trial.

"Sir Hugh," he said, "you must first be so good as to insure us freedom from the very vestige of interruption, from the slightest noise that may disturb the process of the restoration to light and joy."

"It has been already arranged. There is no fear of any disturbance," said Sir Hugh, quickly. "What next, my son?" he added, in an appealing tone, as if to claim the dearest sympathies of him on whom so much depended.

"It is very simple, and yet all important," said the young man, coolly. "This does must first be administered, and then under its influence the magic fluid that has been so efficacious will be poured into the dear, blinded eyes. When Irene awakes we shall know whether there is entire or partial success—or failure," he added, in a low, solemn tone. "And, if success, then in three days from this time I may claim her as my bride. Shall it not be so, my friend?"

"Yes, and Heaven prosper the compact," was the reply of Sir Hugh, while Irene pressed gently in token of assent the hand that held hers.

There was a simple heroism in the quiet submission of that fragile girl to all demanded of her.

She swallowed the potion without a murmur of alarm or hesitation, and then placed her fair head on the pillow and composed herself to slumber with the gentle quietness of a tired child.

Sir Hugh's hands were grasped convulsively as he watched the unconscious trance stealing over his treasured darling's sweet features.

But Eustace only gazed with unmoved calmness till the insensibility was complete.

Then he drew from his dress a small vial and a tiny silver syringe and prepared to approach his patient with his cat-like, velvet step.

But Sir Hugh recoiled for a moment.

He bent down and placed his lips to the young man's ears as he whispered, with almost hissing distinctness:

"Eustace Villiers, the curse of a father will rest on you to your last hour, will pursue you even beyond the grave, if you are false to that angel girl. You are warned; and the avenger will be on your path if you disregard the parent's words—the parent's prayer."

If the young man faltered it was not visibly.

The vial was in his hand, but the fluid did not tremble in the transparent glass to betray one quiver of his fingers.

As he bent over the sleeping girl, and adjusted the syringe to the delicate organ, where one hair's breadth wavering would have been certain destruction, he had the unerring precision of a marksman with an arrow and bow.

The blue-veined lid was raised, the fluid poured calmly, unflatteringly beneath its snowy curtain.

And yet the patient stirred not from that deep trance.

And Sir Hugh trembled as if he believed it were the sleep of death, though he dared not speak, dared not move under the spell which seemed to be cast over him.

Eustace Villiers coldly waived him off as he concluded the operation.

"I will call you," he whispered, "when all is over. At present I must be alone with the sleeper."

Sir Hugh involuntarily submitted to the behest.

There was all at stake—his child's very life, and more than life, hung in the balance, and he was not to place his own selfish desires or terror in the scale.

But it was awful, that dreadful suspense that followed, as he sat in his own solitary apartment, in a half-stupefied, half-burning sense of agony.

And thus perhaps two long hours passed away ere he heard the door open, the approach of footsteps that would herald the terrible message of doom.

Eustace Villiers had spent that interval in perhaps

well nigh as troubled if more vivid thought and feeling.

There were memories, ay, and plans and prospects all floating before his busy brain that might well have driven it to a species of madness had not that powerful brain mastered the tumult within.

Wealth was within his very grasp—beauty and gentleness and grace lay as it were but waiting for his acceptance.

And yet the busy demon at his heart overleapt as it were all this tempting possession, and with a half-sneer of impatient contempt sprang forward to other and more exciting prey.

Yet there was perhaps a species of doubt and hope and fear in the uncertainty of his patient's recovery that somewhat warmed up the cold cynicism of his nature.

And as the minute approached for the termination of that spell-like insensibility, and the knowledge of the result, his face insensibly flushed and his pulses quickened with anxiety.

"Old idiot, old idiot, to tempt his fate," he murmured, as he perceived the first symptoms of revival in the patient's slight movements of limbs and features. "But it must be. None ever crossed my path with impunity. Either they must aid me by their life or their death. Well, we shall see. Now for the result and the wearing of the mask."

He came nearer to the reclining form, his breath well nigh mingled with hers, he bent close, and his lips lightly touched the forehead of the sleeper.

The hour had come.

Her breast heaved, she gave irregular sighs, her lips parted as if to relieve the weight of the labouring breath.

And then at last came the exciting instant when the downcast lids would be raised, and the question answered:

"Does she see?"

He placed himself between her and the shaded light from the windows, over which the jealousies were drawn.

He whispered to her:

"Irene—my Irene."

And then the lids trembled, and at last they were raised, and met those of Eustace with a look of wonder and half-terrified delight that spoke more plainly than words the presence of the long-lost, coveted sight.

"Who is it?" she murmured, with a strange thrill that convulsed her white frame. "Oh, Heaven, is it possible—do I do—my father; my father—and—you are—"

"Yes, dearest, it is I—your Eustace is before you. Irene, I once more place myself as your foot. I ask you once again for your dear hand. I cast myself at your mercy for my whole happiness, my very life. Irene, I have fulfilled my promise. There will soon be a perfect cure; the boon I promised is yours. Is this mine in return?"

And he pressed his lips on the white fingers he held with passionate fervor.

She gazed on him with the curious questioning of a being from another sphere.

"Oh, mercy—mercy," she whispered, "It is so marvellous—so wondrous strange."

"What is strange, my darling?" he said, venturing to cast one arm round her slight form as she raised it from the couch.

"Only I have seen you before," she said.

"Me?" he exclaimed, starting involuntarily.

"Yes," she said, "you—in a picture once, in the Rookery. It was a small miniature—but it was you!"

She closed her eyes with a slight shiver, and sank once again on the pillow with a weary sigh.

"My darling is favored with the joy and excitement," said Eustace, softly. "But thank Heaven she is saved, and a few hours' rest and a draught I shall now administer will restore her to vigour and health. And then," he added, "then for the long-promised boon of my hardly won bride. Now I go to share the joy with Sir Hugh, and bring him for a brief moment, ere I condemn you to darkness again, for a season."

Irene's eyes were closed, and her hands clasped in uncontrollable excitement as she heard the dear close behind him who was so soon to be the lord of her destiny—him to whom she owed obedience and love and honour.

"Victor, Victor," she murmured. "Oh, if I could forget. Ingrate that I am, this blessing, but seems to be a curse, for it stirs up every memory—every instinct of love and sorrow within. But it shall not be—Irene Delancy will be true to her race and to her plighted word, and crush these sinful weaknesses to the very dust of the grave, where all is forgotten. Yes—the grave!"

It was a strange word for a bride elect to use, the "grave"—but both body and mind were strained to the utmost, and Irene sank well nigh again into the stupor from which she had but now been roused.

And the father and lover watched yet for long hours ere she again opened those eyes, from which the disguising film had been removed by that powerful and mysterious agent that had been obtained in far distant lands and of solemn and learned sages in other ages than these modern times.

CHAPTER XIV.

She calls, but she only hears on the flower

The hum of the laden bee;

It is not a time for idle grief,

Nor a time for tears to flow;

The horror that freezes her limbs is brief.

THE bridal morn dawned on the heiress of the Delancys, but under far different auspices than should have attended the wedding of one so fair and so gifted of fortune.

The ceremony was to take place in the spacious saloon of the Villa that had been rarely used since the tenancy of its present inmates, and the officiating clergyman was a young English priest who had taken for a few weeks the duty of the chaplain to the English Embassy.

No bridesmaids, no gazing group of admiring acquaintances and friends, no pomp of carriages and jewels and decorations was to adorn the bridal of that fair young creature for whose hand the proud-est might have striven with eager and humble contention, but she was to be the prime of an unknown and mysterious stranger to her family.

But it was so ordered, so promised, with the word of the nobly born and the true pledged for its fulfilment.

And Irene rose on that eventful morn and bent her knees in humble yet calm and brave submission to the will of Heaven, which had perhaps even then rebuked her agonised mournings at the trial now removed from her young spirit.

Yes, sight had been restored, but was it in mercy or in chastisement for the impatient restlessness that could not endure to wait for Heaven's will in her deliverance?

There was a weight on her soul, but yet she wavered not in her calm, brave acquiescence in her destiny.

She had vowed and she must keep it, even to her own heart.

Her maid was astonished on her entrance to find her young lady already up and dressed in a blue peignoir that was almost as becoming to her delicate loveliness as the bridal array that was laid out on the couches and tables of the spacious apartment.

"Dear me, Miss Irene, what could make you rise so soon?" she said, in utter bewilderment. "Why, I thought it was almost too early to call you even now, and Sir Hugh has not rung his bell yet," she said, half reproachfully.

"I could not sleep. It was better for me to be up, Francesca," returned Miss Delancy, in the soft, gentle tones that seemed to have mellowed into yet richer sweetness during the long affliction of the bodily sense that is most dear to human beings. "But there is time and more than time for dressing, before,"—and she paused painfully—"before the appointed hour."

Poor Irene.

Yes, that hour would be like the knell of doom for her rather than the herald of a sweet and loving life of joy.

"Yes, Miss Irene. Of course there is plenty of time," returned Francesca, half indignantly. "Or else you may be sure I should not have been so waiting in my duty as to have let you sleep so long on such an occasion as this. Though," she added, doubtfully, "I must say that it is the strangest wedding I ever knew for a young lady of rank, and young and beautiful as you are, Miss Irene. A sort of half-and-corner wedding, you may call it, and I only hope it will turn out all right, and that there'll be plenty of rejoicing on our return to England, or may be, in due time, at a christening, Miss Delancy."

Irene gave an impatient shrug at the maid's well-intentioned railery, which only her long service excused, and after a few moments' thought she wrapped a scarf round her shoulders and turned to leave the room.

"I shall be back in a few minutes, Francesca. You can get all ready for my dressing," she said, catching the awe-stricken countenance of her maid at the unexpected movement.

"Bless me, where can she be going?" muttered the Abigail. "But I suppose she wants to see her father—ay, poor dear, she won't have a better time nor more love and care than Sir Hugh has shown her. Bless me, why, she's been the very apple of his eye, and never out of his thoughts nor his sight, as one may say, for many a long month. Dear, dear! It's a strange business, only of course it was a great blessing to get her sight again, and Mr. Villiers is a handsome and fine-mannered gentleman, no one can deny," she went on, musing, as she pursued her dis-

ties. "But for Miss Irene's husband that's quite a different affair."

Meanwhile Irene had taken her way, as the maid suspected, to her father's chamber.

She longed to cast herself in his arms, while once more all his own, to weep in his bosom her gratitude and love and duty, to bid him never desert her, never believe she could cool in her affection for such a parent whatever might be her future relations in life. She paused for a moment at the door.

Perhaps he might have been roused from the slumbers described by Francesca, and already left his bed.

She listened to catch any gesture or movement, or the voice of the valet in attendance on his toilet. But all was still.

"Surely he must be sleeping with strange soundness," she thought, "and on such a morning. Yet it might be that his slumbers have been broken, and he is but now enjoying refreshing rest."

She hesitated whether to waken him under such probable circumstances.

But then the clock sounded from a neighbouring steeple.

It was speeding on the few remaining hours of her freedom, and if she desired to avail herself of that brief space not a minute must be lost.

A slight, cautious tap announced her presence. There was no reply.

Another, and yet another followed, increasing in force and in hurried rapidity as her nervous panic strengthened. She feared she knew not what Sir Hugh was not wont to sleep thus soundly.

Should she awaken him or leave him to finish that singular slumber?

Terror at last answered the question, whether in accordance or not with her sense of propriety and prudence.

She gave one more desperate sudden knock, which was not responded to any more than the gentler appeals for admission, then she turned the handle with fingers that almost trembled too violently for the office, and stood within the room.

"Stood?" yes, for some indescribable terror kept her from at once advancing.

There was such a terrible stillness, such an absence of any evidence of life, that, in all the inexperience of her youth and tender nature, she yet shrank into a very shadow as she listened for a sound in vain.

"Papa!" she said, tremblingly. "Papa, are you awake?"

There was no reply.

"Papa, papa, speak to me!" she shrieked, "to your Irene. I am so frightened!—speak, oh, do not torture me thus!"

Still the fearful silence but made itself more terribly felt as her voice ceased from its imploring cries.

It was too much. She could bear no more, and with a low, yet quivering thrill she darted to the bedside.

The curtains were drawn. She could but dimly discern the interior of the couch, but it was plain that her father's figure lay there in calm rest.

The last vague hope that he might have risen and left the room without being perceived vanished from her mind.

The very agony gave her strength.

She drew back the curtains with one sudden crash of the metal rings that sounded harsh and ominous on the ears.

Then she stooped down and gave one earnest gaze on the sharply marked features as they lay so well and nobly defined on the pillow.

Her own face turned deathly pale.

She did not tremble nor shriek, but she was cold and white as if she lay like that inanimate form before her in motionless repose.

She stooped over him and kissed his cold brow.

Cold!—yes, the touch was but too terribly ominous and full of meaning to her frame and her shattered nerves.

It was ice cold, death cold, without one ray of animation in the features, one tinge of warmth or life in the chill hands that had ever responded so fondly to her slightest caress.

Irene stood for a brief moment stunned, paralyzed, without movement or apparent consciousness of what had happened.

Then she gave one piercing shriek, her head whirled, the objects grew dim and misty before her, and with scarce the comprehension of what was awaiting her, with nothing but that overpowering sense of agony that only time could develop and quicken to the deep suffering that would be lifelong in its sadness, she fell on the couch as senseless as the beloved form by which she lay.

"Mercy on us, that's Miss Irene's voice!" gasped Francesca.

"Gracious me, what on earth is the matter now? I do believe that scream came from Sir Hugh's room,"

observed the valet, who was beguiling his waiting suspense by an English paper not long arrived.

The two domestics, followed by others at a slower pace, rushed into the apartment to be in their turn confounded and stunned by the awful truth.

Terror, confusion, groans, hysterical sobs from the females, and graver, sterner suspicions and cunning looks and words from the men followed the dismay. And it was not till just before the arrival of Eustace Villiers, all gay and brilliant in his wedding array, that Irene had been conveyed to her own chamber, where efforts, as yet fruitless, to restore her to consciousness were tearfully begun by her weeping attendants.

"Let a doctor be at once summoned. There is no time to lose. If death is indeed certain in the case of poor Sir Hugh, it must be promptly averted or your mistress may fall a sacrifice," he said, with enforced and wonderful calmness.

In less than another half-hour Doctor Franks stood by Irene's side, and in a short space his skill sufficed to recall her to consciousness. Then, and not till then, Eustace Villiers gravely drew him apart to consult on the remarkable features of the case.

"Had you any reason to apprehend so sudden a close to Sir Hugh's life, doctor?" he asked, gravely.

"None in the world—on the contrary, I considered him as likely to live for years to a good old age as any man of my acquaintance," was the reply. "Heart, lungs, and brain, were all healthy. I am simply dumbfounded at this catastrophe, and cannot even form a guess as to its cause. But of course there must be a legal inquiry, and post-mortem examination as to the cause of the death."

"Certainly," returned Eustace. "It may be painful to Miss Delaney, of course—indeed it will be so, but it is necessary for the satisfaction of survivors and the ends of justice. Yes, there must be a post-mortem examination without delay."

CHAPTER XV.

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and duty was law.
Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, "It might have been,
Heaven play them both, and pity us all,
Who vainly the dream of youth recall."

"Irene, dearest, you are surely at rest now as to any apprehension for your dear father's having received any injury that might have been the cause of death," said Eustace Villiers, placing himself tenderly beside his betrothed on the sofa where she sat pale but composed and tearless the day after Sir Hugh's remains had been conveyed to a temporary grave in the cemetery by the town.

"I am bound to believe it," she said, in her low, plaintive tones.

"Yes, the most eminent surgeons that could be procured have certified it, dearest, and you are too unselfish and sensible to create causes of needless suffering to yourself or others," he resumed. "You have seen the certificate that it was utterly without apparent cause, unless indeed from some inexplicable excitement of the organs which ended in a reaction and death."

Irene bowed her head again in assent.

It was strange how, while abating from the very slightest appearance of incredulity or rebellion, her manner yet certainly conveyed a kind of quiet reserve from actual and cordial assent to the phenomenon presented to her mind for belief.

"Heaven knows I mourn him almost as bitterly as yourself," resumed Eustace. "I would have indeed given much to have received this dear hand from him, to have witnessed his contentment in our happiness, his sanction to all that will form our best blessings, darling one. But it was not to be. And all that remains is for me to strive to fulfil his duties and take his place as well as my own. You will not delay in giving me the right to do so, my precious one?"

Irene started painfully as she glanced at her deep mourning robe.

"Eustace, it is impossible, you cannot mean it," she said, reproachfully.

"And why not, dearest? Think but for a moment and you will see it is not out of the question as you seem to suppose. If we had been about to form a marriage with all the pomp and gaiety that are so often the attendants on such ceremonies you might well shrink from its celebration. But now when the simple rite that would have made you mine can be performed even without witnesses, save your own servants, and without the slightest exertion or pain to the most sensitive feelings, then I cannot see that the accident of sable instead of white can avail to change your feelings respecting its celebration. Remember, darling, that many unusual circumstances attend our bridal and render its immediate consummation necessary. You are here alone, an orphan, your father had promised you to me ere he died within three hours of the marriage ceremony which would

have given you to me for ever as my own. Should you refuse to let it be performed now there may be most painful and unjust opposition to the marriage from your friends and relations and guardians, Irene, ask yourself—ought this in justice to me to be risked by you?"

Poor girl! poor, desolate orphan!

How her young heart yearned after one friend who had been more than relative or aught else to her in other days.

Now the bare idea that there might be an escape in delay from the union, to which her repugnance was so fearfully strengthened since her bereavement, brought a ray of hope and joy into her sad heart.

But the next moment a deeper gloom than before settled on her soul.

Was she not bound by every vow and every tie?

Did not the power even to have gazed on that beloved dead, to be independent for the present of his constant and tender cares, bind her in gratitude to him who had bestowed it?

And dare she draw back and strive in spirit if not in deed to evade the claim?

"It is sadly sudden, contrary to every feeling, to every usage," she said, sadly. "The funeral rites and the bridal vows are too incongruous, Eustace. Can you not give me some breathing time to recover from this dreadful shock?"

"You will recover best under the soothing influence of a husband's love and cares," he said, firmly.

"Irene, I would not willingly bring one pang to your dear heart. I would not add one sorrow to what you have suffered, could I see that it was possible to avert it. But you must confess that you would but be adding misery to yourself and me by delaying the rite that will make you mine. Irene, I would be loth to remind you of your solemn pledge; I would be loth to recall the suffering from which I delivered you. Still it does give me some right to say that it is my wish, my claim to complete at once what was so sadly deferred."

There was a mingling of authority and of tender pleading in the tone that Irene felt even more keenly than the words.

It was part perhaps of that strange spell that the remarkable man exorcised over those with whom he came in contact.

She bowed her head in her hands, partly to conceal her face and partly to prevent the influence of his fixed, earnest look on her face.

And for some minutes there was silence, save when an uncontrollable heaving of the girl's breast broke on the stillness.

"One effort and it will be over, Irene. It is but as if that miserable trial had happened a few hours later. Indeed it scarce need be known that such was not the case when we return to our old land."

Chilly on Irene's ears fell those familiar words.

What a change there had been since she left her girlhood's home, her own country! And yet it must be borne.

"There should be some more formal and legal steps taken, should there not?" she said, timidly raising her head. "My poor father's affairs should be at once committed to the management of those he had appointed for the duty."

"All shall be done as you may wish," returned Eustace, "when once I have the power to act. Surely, Irene, you cannot wish that others should strive to cast a dishonour on the dead by breaking the bonds which that dear, honoured friend assumed for you?"

"No, no, you are wrong, unjust even to dream it," she said, eagerly; "there never was dishonour on a Delaney, and you may trust in my vow as if it had been spoken at the altar."

"Then speak it there," he persisted, calmly; "it is my right to urge it, Irene, by the memory of the past."

Perhaps a flash of haughty pride did glisten in the large blue eyes, so recently redeemed from darkness, at the words of authority thus persisted in. But it passed into a calmer dignity and resolution as she replied:

"Be it so, then, Eustace. I will fulfil my promise on condition that no vestige of even common ceremonial attend the rite. Let it be performed in complete seclusion, in this deep mourning robe, and let the ring that follows the wedding-ring be the mourning one for which I have kept my dear father's hair. It will at least serve to connect his death with the bridal."

Eustace perhaps gave one triumphant, mocking smile; but, ere Irene could perceive it, it had vanished, and only a bright, tender happiness appeared in the soft expression of his features as he answered:

"Bless you, my darling, for the sweet submission. It shall be my first and last act of tyranny. From the hour that you are mine I will but live to be your slave, the agent of your wishes, the devoted worshipper of your every thought and caprice and will."

And Irene half believed his words, so gently and yet so firmly and fervently spoken.

One week from that date and Irene Delancy again woke on a day fixed for her bridal, but with what different feelings from the former one.

Calm, unmoved, quiet as utter helplessness could make her, she prepared for the momentous hour, and Francesca marvelled at the extreme composure of the fragile creature, who had been as a tenderly sheltered hot-house plant in other days.

The clergyman who was to perform the ceremony came to lead the mourning bride to the altar in that saloon which had been prepared for the ceremony under such different auspices.

He expected to find her trembling, weeping, and shrinking from such an ordeal.

She was calm and still—white, indeed, as snow, which the sable attire made yet more remarkable than it might otherwise have been; but still, without once yielding to the emotion that might well be supposed to overflow her delicate frame, she gave her hand to Eustace as he sprang to meet her, and placed herself quietly before the altar where the vows were to be spoken.

The old major domo, who had accompanied them to Italy, was to give her away, and Francesca and the valet of the late Sir Hugh were to be witnesses of the rite.

Would it be completed even then? or would some sudden, unlooked-for occurrence arrest the strange union?

Perhaps even Eustace asked himself these questions, and his look lacked some of its ordinary cool and unmoved daring as the words fell on his ears:

"I require, I charge you both, to declare if any impediment exists to your union?"

But the solemn warning was unanswered, save by silence, and the ceremony went on.

Irene uttered her vows in gentle, calm, sad tones, that spoke rather of despair than love.

Eustace was firm and eager in the tones he threw into the promises he swore to keep.

But it went on undisturbed, that solemn rite, till the very end.

The blessing was pronounced as they knelt before the priest, and again Eustace took his bride's hand and assisted her to rise, and then pressed his lips tenderly and, as it seemed, with unfeigned love and joy on hers.

"The signatures must be affixed, and then we need not try Mrs. Villiers's fortitude any longer," said the clergyman, kindly.

The certificates were made out in the usual form.

Eustace affixed his name; then Irene took the pen and wrote hers in her beautiful Italian hand.

It was her last effort for composure and strength; the next moment she staggered and would have fallen but that Eustace sprang forward and caught her in his arms.

"Good Heavens! she is dead, my dear young lady!" shrieked Francesca, as she came to the white and senseless bride—"murdered! that's what I call it."

"Pooh, pooh! Don't be foolish," said Eustace, angrily. "Can you not see it is but over-excitement, and that the heart is beating still? Woman, if you are not more careful in your words you will soon be dismissed from the service of Mrs. Villiers. Remember, from this time, I'm your master, as well as Mrs. Villiers will be your mistress."

(To be continued.)

IRON.—Some interesting notes on early chemistry have recently appeared. From them we collect the following as to iron: "Iron was not in common use till long after the introduction of copper. It is far more difficult to procure, because it is not met with in the native state, and the fusing point is very high. The metallurgy of iron is more complex than that of copper, and when obtained it is a more difficult metal to work. According to Zenophon the melting of iron ore was first practised by the Chalubæ, a nation dwelling near the Black Sea; hence the name 'chalups' used for steel, and hence our word 'chalybeate' applied to a mineral water containing iron. Steel was known to the ancients, but we do not know by what means it was prepared; it was tempered by heating to redness and plunging in cold water. According to some, kuanos, mentioned by Homer, was steel; but Mr. Gladstone prefers to conclude that it was bronze. Iron was known at least 1537 B.C. It was coined into money by the Lacedæmonians, and in the time of Lukourgos was in common use. It was used in the time of Homer for certain cutting instruments, such as woodmen's axes, and for ploughshares. Its value is shown by the fact that Achilles proposed a ball of iron as a prize for the games in honour of Patroklos. Neither iron money nor iron implements of great antiquity have been found, because, unlike the other metals of which we have spoken above, iron rusts rapidly and

soon comparatively disappears. No remains of it have been found in Egypt, yet Herodotus tells us that iron instruments were used in building the pyramids; moreover, steel must have been employed to engrave the granite and other hard rocks, massive pillars of which are often found engraved most delicately from top to bottom with hieroglyphics. Again, the beautifully engraved Babylonian cylinders and Egyptian gems, frequently of cornelian and onyx, must have required steel tools of the finest temper. We have no record of the furnaces in which iron ore was smelted, but we know that bellows were in use in the 15th century B.C. in Egypt, and some crucibles of the same period are preserved in the Berlin Museum. They closely resemble the crucibles in use in the present day." We may add that Mr. Layard found an iron saw at Nineveh.

SCIENCE.

THE Finland mines are said to have produced 1,121,197 cwt. of iron ore in 1871, besides 18,317 cwt. of copper and 8,311 cwt. of tin ore. Gold to the amount of 56,685 grammes was washed out in Lapland during the same period.

It is said that a Philadelphia manufacturer is preparing a plan for a column 1,000 feet high, to be constructed entirely of iron, in open work, from the summit of which the grounds of the Centennial Exposition are to be illuminated by means of a Drummond light.

ARSENIC IN PAPER.—The following is an extremely delicate and simple test for arsenic. Generate hydrogen in a flask provided with a jet with pure zinc (free from arsenic) and pure dilute sulphuric acid. Light the gas at jet as soon as the air is displaced from the generating flask, and lower into the flame a piece of porcelain when, if the materials are pure, no deposition takes place. Now introduce pieces of the suspected paper into the flask and again light at jet. On now depressing the porcelain into the flame a black mirror of metallic arsenic is obtained, even if only a very minute quantity of arsenic is present.

NAVAL STATISTICS.—The "Duke of Wellington," the largest of our screw three-deckers, built to carry 180 guns, is now the flagship at Portsmouth; the "Trafalgar" and "Royal Alfred," two other three-deckers, have been cut down and converted—the one into a 24-gun wooden frigate, and the other into an 18-gun ironclad. The "Hotspur" cost 170,000*l.*, the "Glatton" 175,000*l.*, the "Hercules" 400,000*l.*, and the "Devastation" 300,000*l.* Gunboats like the "Comet," which cost only 7,500 apiece, are 85 ft. long, and carry 25 men and one armour-piercing gun. We have already nearly 30 of these formidable craft, which are of the highest value for the defence of our harbours. Half a dozen of them assailing from different quarters a broadside ironclad, defensively weak, like the "Hercules," while furnishing to her a very small mark would constitute a most serious danger to her. But these boats are only floating gun carriages, incapable of proceeding to sea, and the defence of our stormy coasts requires sea-going properties, which the "Comet" does not pretend to possess.

HOW FAR WE SEE.—Herschel was of the opinion that with the telescope he used in those researches in the heavens which immortalized his name in the annals of science, he could penetrate 497 times farther than Sirius, assumed to be at least so far distant that the sun is near at hand in comparison. While exploring with that instrument 116,000 stars flitted by the object glass in one quarter of an hour, and that subtended an angle of only 15 degrees. So all the worlds are moving rapidly in space. Reckoning from the limited zone thus inspected, the whole celestial region could be examined by giving time enough to the enterprise; and, judging from a few sections only within the scope of assisted vision, more than five billions of fixed stars might be reasonably supposed to be recognizable and could be seen with modern improved instruments. But more are beyond, vastly beyond, and we are hoping and expecting that when Mr. Clark, the self-made astronomer, and the most progressive telescope manufacturer now known to science, has completed his great work far more amazing discoveries will be made in the firmament. Surely the mechanism of the heavens demonstrates the existence of an Intelligent First Cause, since such magnificent displays of unnumbered worlds, regulated by laws which secure order in the universe, could not have originated themselves.

NEW PROCESS FOR EXTRACTING GOLD AND SILVER FROM COPPER PYRITES.—This method, invented by F. Claudet, is based upon the insolubility of the iodides of gold and silver. After the pyrites have been desulphurized by the addition of salt they are placed in a barrel with a false bottom and lixiviated with acidulated water. The wash water consists of sulphate of soda, chloride of copper, and some chloride of silver. From this liquor the copper may be precipitated in a metallic state by means of sheet iron

or iron scraps; but if the noble metals are to be separated the waters from the three first extractions are collected and the requisite quantity of iodide of potassium in solution is added to them. After having been left undisturbed for twenty-four hours the clear liquor is drawn off, the vessel is then filled again, and iodide of potassium is added (in short, the operation is repeated) until a sufficiently large quantity of precipitate has collected. This contains sulphate of lead and copper salts, besides the iodides of gold and silver. The salts of copper are washed out, whereupon the residue is mixed with zinc in a finely divided form, which combines with the iodine. Hence the result is a mixture of gold, silver, lead, and some oxide of zinc, from which it is easy to separate the noble metals. Claudet produced in 1871 by this process from 16,800 tons of desulphurized pyrites 333,242 kilogrammes silver, and 3,172 kilogrammes gold at a net profit of 3,866*l.*

THE FIRST 35-TON GUN.

ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER MILNE, G.C.B., First Naval Lord of the Admiralty, presided at a recent meeting at the Royal United Service Institution, when a paper was read by Commander William Dawson, R.N., on "The Powder Pressure in the first 35-ton Gun" for the "Devastation." The paper was illustrated by designs showing the state of its interior on leaving and on returning to the gun factories, and by corresponding diagrams of some other disabled "Woolwich" guns.

Basing his remarks on the official tables of pressures as interpreted by the report of the Ordnance Inspector upon the state of the bore at several periods, the lecturer animadverted on the absence of examinations into the injuries inflicted upon the projectiles in their efforts to escape, arguing that as all recovered service projectiles were found so injured as to be obliged to be broken up, and most "proof" shot required re-studding after firing, it was most reasonable to suppose that the 700 lbs. shot were no exception to the general rule.

According to Commander Dawson, after 35 discharges from the 11½-inch bore the interior of the gun was renewed by boring it up to 12-inch calibre with a corresponding reduction of the pressures. But after 38 horizontal discharges the 12-inch bore was so injured by the projectiles as to necessitate the rebuilding of the gun. Moreover, the powder charges have since been permanently reduced from 120 lbs. to 110 lbs., and even these are used with some trepidation, for only one other 35-ton gun had since been fired, and that one had only fired 19 reduced charges of 110 lbs. nearly horizontal, and 46 small ones of 85 lbs. in eight months at Shoeburyness; whilst the "proof" of all others is fixed at two horizontal reduced charges of 110 lbs. and 115 lbs. Thus a permanent loss of velocity and striking force was a direct consequence of the absence of endurance in the late "Woolwich Infant."

The table of pressures shows that when the 12-inch bore was fresh from the factory 110 lb. Waltham Abbey pebble charges gave very regular maximum pressure of 20½ tons. But when the 12-inch bore had sustained 34 to 38 discharges the registers were very irregular and averaged 31½ tons. Similarly the first 115 lb. Waltham Abbey pebble charges in the 12-inch bore gave very regular mean maximum pressures of 22½ tons, but the latter ones (30th to 38rd round) gave 44½ tons. And the 120 lb. charges tell the same tale, beginning at 20 tons and running up to 66 tons.

The lecturer asked what happened to the bore between the earlier and the later 12-inch discharges, and would these growing alterations in the bore have caused the pressures to go on increasing in the same ratio if the firing could have been continued?

The same misdirection of mechanical forces was shown to be in operation in other guns similarly rifled, tending to impede the free exit of the shot, to injure the projectile and the guns, and to diminish the velocities and striking force, whilst giving rise to accumulation of gases and elevation of pressures in the bore. Till these mechanical forces were directed aright inspectors of ordnance, the lecturer urged, must be employed to register the injuries inflicted on heavy guns by every fifty projectiles in their efforts to escape; recovered projectiles must continue to be broken up; identical charges of similar powder, fired under like conditions, would be each liable to produce extravagantly but not extraordinarily different results, and our heavier guns would be as lacking in endurance as in the year 1872, a year of profound peace, when a few shot on canvas targets resulted in the return of at least six heavy Woolwich rifled guns to the royal gun factories for rebuilding or repair.

A TRAGEDY of Shakespeare's has been performed for the first time on the Spanish stage. At Madrid "Hamlet" has been brought out in a Spanish version by Don Carlos Coello.



[A TIGER AT BAY.]

THE GOLDEN LURE.

CHAPTER XI.

Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.
Shakespeare.

DOCTOR EVLIN—the reader has doubtless long ago guessed his identity—started immediately for Chichester, and called on the attorney, whom he found alone in his office.

"I am Edward Evlin, surgeon," he announced, advancing towards the lawyer, hat in hand. "I presume I have the honour of addressing Mr. Adam Brownell?"

Brownell sprang up and grasped his hand.

"I am the man, and I'm very happy to see you. I wrote to you months ago, but never received a reply. Sit down, Mr. Evlin, I want to have a long talk with you."

"That is exactly what I came for, and as I have no disposition to linger, or mince matters, I will proceed to business immediately."

Evlin held the ebony box and Jane Brent's letter in his hand.

"Can you tell me anything of the man Ingersol? Did you ever have reason to suspect that there was foul play done? That, instead of perishing in the sea, your client, Jane Brent, was murdered at Ingersol's instigation?"

The suddenness of the question startled the lawyer.

"I have thought that all was not right, but I never fancied he had put her out of the way."

Evlin handed the package to him.

"Here is a suspicious document I would like you to examine and give your opinion of."

A profound silence reigned through the room for a time, then Brownell laid aside the terrible evidence and, putting his hand on the surgeon's shoulder, said, in a stern tone:

"My suspicions were aroused long ago, and there has been foul play. We have only to arrest Ingersol and his accomplices and convict them, not only of the death of Captain Blane and the mate, but also of the murder of Jane Brent. I myself will immediately see that the papers are made out for their arrest."

"Where is he now?"

"He went yesterday to Marshmellow. I think he intends to remain a week or more. I will get the necessary documents, and we will cage him directly."

After a little more conversation Evlin returned to the hotel and Brownell went to communicate the particulars to the police authorities and secure their assistance.

The next morning, accompanied by the lawyer and a couple of officers, Evlin went to the Hall, but, to their chagrin, they found Ingersol had left the day previous for Wolfden Waste, and would not be back for several days.

Brownell, knowing that access to the gloomy towered Waste was impossible without boats, proposed that they should remain at Marshmellow until he should return.

"You may remain here," said Evlin, impatiently, "but I will ride down there and perhaps capture the miscreant and bring him to you!" and, putting spurs to his horse, he dashed madly away.

He rode rapidly, and in course of time he reached the lake.

It was as Brownell had told him.

There rolled the broad, fair expanse of water, but he was without means of crossing.

Dismounting from his horse, he hitched the faithful beast in the shadow of a thicket and walked down to the water's edge.

A gay laugh came ringing towards him, and, stepping back and screening himself behind a tree, he looked in the direction from which the sound seemed to proceed.

He saw two men standing near the shore, talking, the elder of whom presently got into a skiff, saying, as he pushed off:

"Good-bye, Ingersol."

The younger turned in Evlin's direction, and as he came nearer he was so close that Evlin could have touched him with his hand.

At last, unable any longer to contain his rage, the surgeon suddenly confronted him.

"Knave! midnight assassin! what have you done with Jane Brent?" he cried, in a terrible voice, swinging his heavy riding-whip high in the air.

Ingersol's face became livid with horror.

Who was this singular stranger that dared to follow him to this lonely fastness and ask of him what he had done with Jane Brent?

What had he done with her? Why simply nothing.

"I don't know who you are or where you came from, nor do I know anything of Jane Brent; I only know you are a vile and impertinent dog," retorted Ingersol, loftily.

The surgeon's heavy whip came smartly over the villain's eyes, and, maddened with rage, he drew his revolver, and, ere Evlin could knock it from his hand, there was a report, and with a wild cry the surgeon fell face downward to the ground, the blood running in a stream from a wound in his shoulder.

With livid lips Ingersol sat down to recover himself.

But it was no time to linger.

He would drag the body down to the lake and toss it in.

He put his hand upon the heart. It was still.

"The idiot is dead, sure enough, but he deserved it," he muttered.

And gathering the body in his arms he bore it to the water's edge, and with all his strength threw it in.

Then, turning hastily, he walked away.

Evlin fell with a dull splash into the shallow waters, his head resting on a bar of sand that extended into the lake.

From her hiding-place Jane Brent had seen the encounter, although she could not distinguish the words, and witnessed the disposal of the body.

Dykham long ago was out of sight.

Ingersol had started on his return journey, and she determined to again get into her boat and continue her flight.

Her close proximity to the dead man made farther stay impossible.

Gathering up her cloak and basket, she uncovered her skiff and, taking up the sculls, pushed off.

Her eyes involuntarily turned shoreward as she went by.

As she did so she saw the lips of the supposed corpse flutter feebly, and his eyes open wearily; then he made an effort to rise.

Seeing that he was yet alive she approached, unconscious that the man before her was he whom she had secretly acknowledged in her heart to be the king of men.

"What is the matter with me?" he asked, faintly.

"You are shot," a voice replied; "I think Ingersol tried to kill you."

"Oh, yes, I remember," he said, sinking back on the sand, a dull-red flush overspreading his face.

Pulling the boat on the end of the bar, with her assistance Evlin was soon lying in the bottom of the skiff, and, taking up the sculls again, she sent it with steady sweeps over the bosom of the lake.

He was lying on his side, his face partially concealed.

She spoke to him, but he did not reply, and bending over him she saw that he was in a dead faint.

She rowed for the farther shore and turned into a small cove, then getting out her wine-jug she knelt, and pushing back the dark locks that covered his face, was about to apply the wine to his mouth.

The jug slipped from her hand and with eager, wistful eyes she devoured the countenance before her.

The face was white and rigid as marble, but there was none other like it in all the world.

"It is he!" she cried, clasping her fingers tightly, the happy tears streaming over her cheeks.

"Doctor Evlin, awake!"
Evlin opened his eyes again and she placed the wine to his lips.

He sipped it, revived and sat up.
"I knew you would come some day, but I have waited a long time," she panted, clutching her fingers spasmodically.

The tones of her voice were familiar to him. They reminded him of one whom he had known somewhere before.

He looked at her strangely.

"Who are you that you should expect me? Push back your hat that I may see your face," he said, authoritatively.

The colour surged over her face, making her alternately white and crimson as she obeyed.

A faint cry escaped him.

"It is, it must—it cannot be."

He could not articulate the words.

"I am Jane Brent," said she, smiling.

Then, despite his wound, this wonderful surgeon, this crusty bachelor, seized her lovingly in his arms and kissed her.

"I have found you after all."

"Why did you let me leave Sandhill? Or if you had come with me all our trouble would not have been."

With something of his old petulance, he cried, hotly:

"I did come with you. I saw you every day on board the ship. I watched you, took care of you, and when the storm came up I fed you, and you returned my care with scorn. For kindness you gave insolence. What else could I do? Positively, miss, you shamed the deer in my face on more occasions than one."

Jane stood up before him, her lips apart, her eyes distended.

"Then you are the—the fat man?" she panted.

Evlin nodded.

"I was Roger Doddworth, merchant, bound for Liverpool."

"I might have known it."

"There is no time to be lost in regrets at what might have been. We must make all haste to Marshmellow Hall," said Evlin. "Adam Brownell and the officers are there waiting to arrest Ingersol. Let us go to the landing yonder where my horse is hitched and we can ride double until we reach the nearest house, where I can procure a vehicle of some kind."

She pushed back again to the other shore, and by the time she reached it Evlin had bound up his wound and was feeling much better.

The horse neighed loudly as they came in sight of him. He was large and strong, and for a short distance would carry them easily. Mounting quickly, they turned and rode in the direction of a house Evlin had seen on the hillside as he came down.

CHAPTER XII.

Dangers that we see.

To threaten ruin are with ease prevented;
But those strike deadly that come unexpected.

Mansinger.

INGERSOL made his way home moodily. He wondered much who the stranger was whom he had shot and who had asked so pertinaciously what he had done with Jane Brent.

"It cannot be that an inkling of the real affair has come to light," he muttered, as he came in sight of Marshmellow. "Dykham cannot have blundered this time, after having served me so faithfully before."

Brownell was pacing up and down the terrace.

Ingersol looked surprised to see him there, but not a suspicion of the object of his visit entered his mind.

The lawyer did not perceive Ingersol's approach. He had entered by the side gate, and was slowly strolling up the rear walk when he encountered a servant.

"When did the lawyer come?" he asked, impudently.

"This morning, sir. He and two other gentlemen are waiting for you to come home. They said they had business with you, and could hardly afford to wait."

"Two other gentlemen?"

The words had an ominous ring in them. Ingersol could hardly repress a shudder as he listened; but smothering off the feeling he started leisurely up the walk.

The leaves rustled beneath his feet, and the tall old trees were covered with russet and brown, but the Hall looked pleasant in contrast with the gloom of Wolden.

"This is mine—all mine," he mused, glancing over the scene. "Mine to enjoy while life lasts, and, be that life ever so short, I will manage to spend every farthing."

As he turned to ascend the stone steps a heavy hand was laid firmly on his shoulder, and a man in the uniform of a policeman said, in a deep and solemn voice:

"Ernest Ingersol, I arrest you on the charge of murder."

Ingersol stepped back.
"Tis false—infamous!" he shouted. "I defy you, and take me if you dare!"

His eyes grew terrible in their expression, his face became swollen and livid and great knots corrugated his brow.

The officer still maintained his grasp. Ingersol endeavoured to release himself, but in vain.

"Let me go, I tell you. If you do not this instant take your hand from my shoulder I will send a bullet through that villainous heart of yours. Let go, I say."

But the man of law only held him tighter, and, signalling to his assistant, the handcuffs were slipped on Ingersol's wrists and he was forced into the house.

In spite of his resistance he was afterwards placed into a close carriage, and, guarded by the officers, conveyed to jail, where he was confined in the strongest cell of the prison.

Late that evening, wounded, tired, but triumphant, Evlin reached Chichester, with Jane Brent, and stopped at an hotel where the surgeon secured a suite of rooms and ordered a hot supper for himself and companion.

It was not until the next day that he called on the lawyer. He looked pale and worn, and carried his arm in a sling.

Brownell noticed it.
"Good Heavens! what is the matter?" cried he, as he perceived Evlin's changed appearance.

"Our Ingersol endeavoured to finish me," replied he, with a light shiver of his shoulder. "I think I should have been dead by this time if it had not been for the timely appearance of a young lady."

"Is it possible?" ejaculated the lawyer. "And there was a lady mixed up in it. During all my thirty years' practice I do not remember ever having had a single case but what a woman in some way or other was concerned in it."

"Indeed! But in this instance the lady is considerably interested in the whole case, from beginning to end. In fact, I may say, that she plays a most important part in the will of old John Marsh."

"The deuce!"

The lawyer sprang to his feet.

"You don't mean to say," cried he, excitedly, "that—that the heiress of Marshmellow Hall and the hundred thousand pounds is not dead?"

"I mean that very thing," said Evlin, composedly.

"Will wonders never cease? Explain how it happened that you found her, and where she has been hiding all these long months."

Evlin then related the whole circumstances, which the reader already knows, including his encounter with Ingersol and the manner in which his life was saved by Jane Brent.

"You have had a narrow escape. But, seeing that it was the result of your own rashness in going off alone, I cannot regret the matter," said Brownell, musingly. "I must see Miss Brent immediately."

The lawyer put on his hat and accompanied by the surgeon visited his young client.

Jane was flushed, hopeful and happy. She had every reason to be so. She had won the only heart she cared for, and was the undisputed owner of an immense fortune.

She possessed beauty, brains, and money, and had engaged herself to one who in her eyes was a prince of his kind.

Brownell bowed low over her tiny hand, his eyes sparkling his admiration.

"You have at last come to have your own restored to you, Miss Brent. I am very glad this is the case, and I will hasten to see that you become established as mistress of Marshmellow without further delay."

"I will not deny that I want my own, sir," she said. "But there is a matter of more importance than proving my claim to the hundred thousand pounds."

"What is that, Miss Brent?"

"It is this, to arrest and bring to justice Dykham and his wife, who, to my knowledge, murdered Captain Blanc and the mate of the ship 'Fire Fly' on the night of the wreck, the nineteenth of November."

"It shall be done," he replied, impressively.

CHAPTER XIII.

No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. *Shakespeare.*

DYKHAM was home at last.

His wife, fearful of the consequences, did not mention the escape of their prisoner. She felt that were she to do so her life would be most summarily ended by her brutal husband.

She, however, took the skiff and went in search of the escaped captive.

And she found her not. She discovered the girl's place of concealment, where she had slept in the

hollow of the two trees, and the fragments of her breakfast, that lay scattered around on the leaves.

She raged and stamped the ground with her angry feet; but passionate lamentations availed nothing, and, forced to acknowledge herself beaten, she stepped into the boat again and started for Wolden.

Dykham stood on the landing, looking grim and angry.

"Where have you been all day?" he demanded, gruffly.

"Out on the lake."

Her voice was as scornful as his own.
"Out on the lake? And pray what has your prisoner done for food during your absence?"

"I don't suppose she has starved."

"By the way," said he. "I think I must visit the damsel this evening. It has been a long time since I saw her, and I would like to hear her rave a little, by way of amusement."

"You cannot see her," she said, firmly.

Dykham laughed sneeringly.

"Be careful, madam! You must remember that I am master of this house, and if I take a notion to look at anything or anybody there is in it I shall do so. Hand me the keys—I go now."

"You shall not have them!"

"Give me the keys, or I will make you wish you had!"

He grasped her arm like a vice, and she screamed with the pain.

"Hand them over!"

He quailed her glance to the house, and, through the doorway into the kitchen.

"The keys, I say!"

She again refused to deliver them up to him.

With a savage imprecation he dealt her a stunning blow on the temple, and, snatching the keys from her pocket, went up to the tower.

"Get yourself in readiness, Jane Brent, for I am come to visit you!" he roared, unlocking the door and boldly entering the apartment.

There was no reply.

He looked around ominously for the prisoner. The bed was tumbled, clothing lay scattered over the floor, and the rope made of the bedding flapped before his astonished eyes.

"It cannot be possible that she has got away," he muttered, searching the room hurriedly. "I wonder if her jailer was prevailed upon to allow her to free herself."

He stalked wrathfully down to his wife.

"Where is the prisoner?" he demanded, furiously.

"She has escaped," replied his wife, tremulously.

Dykham poured forth a terrible volley of imprecations.

"And you—you helped her off, I dare swear!" he shouted, seizing his wife by her hair and dragging her over the floor.

"No, no!" she shrieked. "Dykham, I did not—truly, I knew nothing of it until she was gone!"

Despite her prayers and groans and tears he beat and kicked her fearfully.

So engrossed in his horrible work was he that he did not notice the continued howling of the dog chained to the landing, nor did he perceive the approach of a party of men, who sprang from a large boat, and came towards the scene of action.

A strong hand dealt him a blow that nearly knocked him off his feet, and when he recovered his balance Dykham saw himself surrounded by officers.

"What is up, I wonder?" he muttered, putting his hand in the bosom of his coat, and suddenly withdrawing a loaded revolver. "Jane! Brent! have peached, I'll bet!"

The officers watched him quietly.

"That won't do, Dykham. Put up that pistol, and be peaceable; you'll fare much better," said one of them, in a cold tone, pointing his own weapon full in the innkeeper's face.

Dykham did not move an inch.

"I want to know," he said, "by whose authority you come to my house in the way you have done now. I advise you to leave as soon as you can; if you don't want a supper of cold lead and a bed to-night in the lake," he growled, resolutely.

"We come by authority of the magistrate, and, in the name of the queen, to arrest you for the murder of the wrecked men of the ship 'Fire Fly.'"

"The deuce you do. Clear out of this, and quick too, I tell you, or you'll wish your walls were made."

The officers seemed amused at the innkeeper's words.

There was a sort of horrible fascination to them in the manner in which Dykham received his arrest.

"Bound to die game," whispered one, with a sly wink at his companion. "Never saw his match."

The chief made a quick, noiseless gesture with his finger, and simultaneously the men sprang upon the ruffian.

The pistol was knocked from his hand, and in another instant Dykham was overpowered, his legs bound together, and handcuffs locked on his wrists.

"The jig is up and the dance is done," muttered

she conquered villain. "I expect to swing next week, but I'll not be alone in going into the next world with my neck stretched. The old woman and Ingersol shall voyage over there with me."

Dashing some water in the face of his wife, the officers soon had her restored to consciousness, and then, conveying their prisoners to the boat, they shut the house, and, locking it, returned with their captives to the town and left them in custody.

CHAPTER XIV.

Murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. *Shakespeare.*

With a party of trusty men Evlin returned to the old inn on the coast, and searched it thoroughly. "I am determined to probe this matter to the very bottom," said he as they descended the staircase and entered the narrow hall that led into the vaults below.

Raising the heavy trap-door, a gush of damp, noxious air rushed up through the aperture.

Pansing for a moment, Evlin lighted a taper, and taking a pickaxe went down the stairs. The sheriff followed with him.

Reaching the bottom of the vault they turned to the right of the staircase.

As Evlin stepped forward something crunched on the hard floor, and a fine thick dust filled his mouth and nostrils.

A shiver ran over him as the flickering light of the taper flared brightly over the spot.

There, on the bare floor, lay the fleshless bones and grinning skull of a skeleton, with a worn memorandum book in the awful hands.

A tin lamp, empty, and covered with rust, stood upon the floor.

Removing the book from the grasp of the skeleton, he sat down and opened it.

The pages were mouldy and the writing faint, but he grew pale with horror as the terrible meaning became clearer to his mind.

"Whoever may find this book is hereby charged to read it to the end, and see that justice is done. I, James Blane, captain of the ship 'Fire Fly,' with my mate, Edward Bradley, and one passenger, Jane Brent, were wrecked on this coast on the night of the nineteenth of November, 18—"

"Be it known that I, James Blane, do herein charge the innkeeper, Dykham, and his wife to be guilty of the murder of the mate, Bradley."

"Hearing a cry in the night, I arose in time to see his corpse borne out of the room and down the stairs. I followed them through the corridors, down into this vault. Hiding in the shadow of the iron staircase, I watched the innkeeper dig a deep grave in one corner of this room, and when it was finished they threw Bradley's body in it and covered it over with earth."

"As they were filling it up I swooned away, and when I recovered all was still. I am alone with the dead. I have screamed aloud, and tried, with all my strength, to lift the heavy flagstone that shut me out from life. But I cannot escape."

"They have left the tin lamp, and by its last expiring rays I now write these lines—a record of their crime, which, with Divine help, will some day bring them to justice."

"Now, whoever may find this record is most solemnly adjured to seek out and seize upon the innkeeper and his wife, and have them tried and condemned for the murder—the murder of the mate, Edward Bradley."

"Here by the grave that holds his lifeless body, where in a few short days my own will decay, this manuscript will lie, and call for vengeance. As ye shall perform the task I have allotted to you so may Heaven reward you. "CAPTAIN BLANE."

The last page was read, and, with a deep groan, the reader fell back against the wall.

Recovering himself, however, he got up, and, taking the taper, looked around the vault.

There it was in one corner, the long, high-heaped grave on which no rain had ever fallen, no sun or stars had ever shone.

At a signal from him the men fell to work, excavating the earth that filled the green, slime-covered mound.

We cannot explain why it was, for there are many singular things in this singular world of ours which are unaccountable, but the corpse they found in that dismal grave looked nearly as fresh as if it had been placed there but a few hours before.

And Evlin instantly recognised the features and clothing to be that of the mate, Bradley.

Horrible, stained garments and heaps of mouldering bones were found about the terrible house, which justified the surgeon in declaring the innkeeper to have been the author of more than one murderous crime, and of which he had sufficient proof to satisfy any jury in England.

The remains of Captain Blane and the mate were interred with solemn ceremonies in the chapel yard, and then Evlin returned to Chichester to assist at the trial of the three whose crime-stained hands had

nearly put an end to his own life and that of his affianced.

In the course of a few days Ingersol and the Dykham were brought to trial, the latter for the murder of the mate of the "Fire Fly" and the former for conspiring to murder Jane Brent and attempting the life of Dr. Evlin.

The innkeeper, seeing there was no hope of escaping the punishment of his crimes, made a confession, implicating Ingersol not only in the conspiracy against Miss Brent but in various other murderous transactions, including the poisoning of John Marsh, in which he had been the willing tool of his avaricious employer.

The three were convicted and in a short time expiated their crimes on the gallows.

After her fearful trials Jane Brent was finally established in her rightful home, her birthright settled upon her, and her tenantry and neighbours grew to love her for her goodness.

The afflicted and the poor, the infirm and the aged, had in the mistress of Marshmellow a friend who never turned a deaf ear to their woes or sent them away empty-handed from her door.

In the society of his wife Evlin forgets his craftiness. He slips quietly out of the cranky ways with which bachelorhood invariably endows a disciple, and to-day Jane points him out to her friends as a "model Benedict."

THE END.

THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER due consultation, and some weeks of delay for various reasons, old Boissey concluded to transfer his workshop to London, greatly to the delight of his ambitious apprentice, who thought he saw in this move a decided change for the better in his prospects.

Ned had taken his time, and had carefully dissected the chest-lock to find upon a critical disintegration of the contents of the steel outer case that the combination of the device was original, so far as he was then informed; and, in his best judgment, he concluded that it must have been invented a great many years before he saw it.

The principle of its action was what he had for a long time been studying to arrive at. He had a vague idea of this, through his own experience and experiments.

Now he saw clearly how he could apply this action to his own partially completed process and contrivance for a reliable burglar-proof safe or bank-lock—which, being attained, his fortune was made!

But the indentured apprentice was as yet not nineteen years old.

For two years he had still to toil for Boissey's benefit.

He was willing to give his employer the labour of his hands, but he did not feel inclined to give him the advantage of his brain-work in this particular instance.

Ned was without pecuniary means. Every shilling he earned was confiscated by old Boissey by legal right; and he would come to his majority penniless, as he well knew, though he would then be master of a good trade.

He therefore abscondedly resolved to keep his recent discovery and his other plans entirely to himself.

Up to this time—now some months after Captain Blount's first interview with and proposal to Boissey—Ned Corson had no direct intimation from the well-disposed captain regarding his friendly intentions toward him.

When Boissey determined to remove his shop to London Captain Blount suggested that he be permitted to confer with the young man and inform him how and why he was inclined to aid him.

"No," said Boissey, selfishly; "I can take care of the boy. I have done so for near four years, haven't I?"

"So you have, Boissey. But—"

"I see no buts in your plan. The lad is my apprentice. I've fed and housed and clothed him so far, as I'm glad to, and what's his'n's wife for over two years yet. Aren't it so, Boissey?"

"Yes."

"And you know how it is. One on us must be master. That's me. If you do what you want to do for him, through me, all right. I go to London and give him his chance. If not—not; and there's an end on't. I don't care which way it goes. I don't want to go to London. I will go if I can see my way. If not—not."

"Well, have your own sweet will about it, Boissey. You're a hard fellow to deal with, but I know you're an honest man, and that's enough. I want the boy to get on, and I'll put the money in your hands, which I intended giving him outright, and knowing

that you'll take good care of yourself while you're helping him."

"Be it so, then, neighbour."

"He'll help himself if you give an even chance, Boissey. He's smart and ambitious."

"I think so, Blount."

"I know so, I tell you."

And within a week from this final colloquy the locksmith began his preparations for removing his goods and chattels towards London, after having first gone there and secured what he deemed a convenient and advantageous locality for the prosecution of his profession.

The locksmith's new quarters were established in a leading thoroughfare in one of the busiest parts of London, and his shop was fitted up with fresh tools, new lathes, steel planer, and ample modern arrangements throughout—under the superintendence of his ambitious apprentice.

When all was ready for occupancy the old sign, which had hung over his country cottage door so many years, upon which were figured the emblems of his trade—the padlock and crossed keys—was cleaned and furnished up for use in town.

As long as the old artisan took possession, and Captain Blount handed him a hundred pounds in clean bank notes to defray all charges incident to this radical change in business affairs.

And one morning the passers-by in the busy street in the metropolis, where the new aspirant for public patronage had established himself, noted the clean but well-worn sign that had been transferred from his sea-side shop, in its renovated state, which was placed prominently over his door: "Boissey, Locksmith."

This change from the old routine in the quiet country village had been urged upon his master by Ned Corson for months; but the determined opposition which the locksmith continually set up against the lad's suggestions had rather disheartened him in his endeavours to move the old man in the desired direction.

As young Ned was not let into the secret of his good fortune through Captain Blount's kindness, and therefore knew nothing of the real cause of Boissey's final decision to remove to town, he naturally supposed that his arguments and advice to his employer had brought about the result he had so long aimed to accomplish.

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," said Boissey to himself. "The boy thinks it's his doing—this move. Let him believe it. It's a good thing. It'll all work right. And the two years as' more he's got yet to move out his time will bring me in a handsome penny here; for he's got to be a capital workman."

Before he returned and replaced the unique lock upon the ancient teak-wood chest the young apprentice took accurate drawings of all its working parts, and studied carefully all the minutiae of its admirable motion and subtle combination.

These drawings he enlarged to quadruple the dimensions of the original, and then he proceeded to construct a working model of his intended bank-safe lock.

He had already, several months before this, contrived a very ingenious and skilfully conceived design for this purpose, which was strictly original with him. He had devoted a great deal of time and many experiments to the accomplishment of this device—but it was incomplete when he came upon the old chest-lock at the lightkeeper's house. The true principle of the secret motive power in his invention was lacking.

Now he had discovered it. In his attempted application of this principle of motion to his own model he found very quickly where he had failed of success at first, and he also learned that even this contrivance by itself alone would not accomplish his long-cherished object.

By a happy conjunction of the best features of both, however, he was satisfied that he could now construct a safe-lock that would beat the world.

"And so you are going to leave us, Noddy?" said Katrin to her long-time companion, one night, at the lightkeeper's humble dwelling, as the two young friends sat together chatting over the contemplated departure of the lad.

"I'm going to London, Katrin, at last," responded Ned. "I have for a long while urged this upon the old man, and finally he has opened his eyes to the advantages that my suggestions will afford him in time. The result will greatly aid me as well—and help me to opportunities for rapid and reliable advancement hereafter."

"I am glad of this, then, for your sake, Noddy. You will grow to manhood soon, and who knows but you'll turn out a great man in your profession one of these days?"

"I don't know about that, Katrin. I shall complete my apprenticeship under more favourable auspices,

at any rate; and I may one day be able to accomplish the object of my hopes—the aim to be a first-class mechanic, in my way.”

“Your wish is certainly commendable, Neddy,” continued Katrin. “You’ve got along nicely so far, they all say, and I’m sure your ambition to excel in your chosen avocation will not flag now. You will always have the heartfelt good wishes of your friends here, and I trust you will be prosperous and happy in your new sphere.”

“Thank you, Katrin. I shall always endeavour to merit the good feelings of those who take an interest in me; and above all, believe me, your continued sympathy and friendship.”

“So you feel now, Neddy,” replied Katrin, with a dash of coyness. “But, Ned, one of these days you’ll perhaps get to be noted. Your name will come to be known, perhaps famous, as an artisan, a master workman, and inventor maybe. Then you’ll have no time to think of the humble, quiet country folk of your younger days—least of all of the poor little girl-wait of the lighthouse.”

“Why, bless you, Katrin, I’m not going to leave the country!” rejoined Ned, and he took her slender fingers fondly in his own hard hand as he spoke. “I’m not leaving you for good, you know. London isn’t so far away but that I shall be able to come and see the old friends again—and often I hope.”

“‘Out o’ sight out o’ mind,’ Neddy; you know it’s an old saying. You’ll soon become engrossed with your new duties and surroundings, and you’ll find little leisure for those who can’t be of service or profit to you.”

“When I forget you, Katrin, I shall have ceased to remember any one in this wide world,” rejoined the lad, earnestly. “No, I will come back; and my friends, who have been so kind to me here in my poor boyhood, shall at least never have it to say that Ned Corson, the poor locksmith’s apprentice, was ungrateful for or unmindful of their favour. Never, Katrin!”

“When do you leave us, Neddy?”

“Three days hence. And now good-night, Katrin. I will run over again to-morrow.”

Next day Ned went to the lightkeeper’s lowly dwelling again, and the morrow being Christmas Day, when he would be entirely at leisure, he once more visited Katrin and passed the latter part of the day and evening in her pleasant society.

By invitation of the grateful captain he dined at Blount’s mansion, where the good, old-fashioned holiday repast was enjoyed by the poor apprentice right joyfully, after which he retired in company with Katrin for their humble home, and spent the final hours of his stay in the village with her.

“The years roll round, Katrin,” he said, “and this season of pleasure never comes but it brings to my remembrance the time when I was cast upon this rough shore, in the midst of the ‘great storm,’ a helpless baby! I knew nothing of it, and can never know how those to whom I belonged must have suffered. But I have so many times heard the painful story of the wreck that when Christmas time arrives I am so sad while everybody else seems so happy.”

“It was many years ago, Ned,” replied Katrin, sympathetically.

“Yes. But I cannot forget that this day, sixteen years since, was a frightful one in my poor history. Now, however, I am ready to leave the spot.”

“And no doubt very gladly.”

“Yes—and no, Katrin. In a business view it is best. Socially, I am not happy. I call to mind that you spoke of probable inconstancy the other night, Katrin,” said the young man, shyly. “I’ve been thinking, since, that your condition may perhaps be changed, in the future, in some way that neither you nor I can now conceive of. Who knows? You have often told me you were ignorant of your birth and parentage. Who can say how soon you may turn out to be the child of wealthy or noble parents, for instance? Then—when you’re a fine lady, and come to possess a fortune, say—would you be likely to remember the poor locksmith’s boy who has so often sat with you beside the old brown chest here, and talked of his and your hopes, Katrin?”

“I shall never be ‘a fine lady,’ Neddy,” said Katrin. “I shall surely never tumble into any fortune! But, whatever lot is in reserve for me, I shall never forget the gallant youth who twice saved my life. Nor can I ever cease to be his grateful, devoted, constant friend!” added Katrin, with genuine heartfelt emotion.

“Thanks, Katrin, many thanks—and, trust me, I shall always think of you with lively pleasure hereafter, wherever I go. I am off at daybreak to-morrow. So—good-bye!”

Thus the youthful companions at the lighthouse separated.

Early next morning Ned left his dull country home for London.

The days that succeeded Ned Corson’s departure

from the village passed wearily away with Katrin Delorme, who found herself quite alone now at the lightkeeper’s dwelling.

She missed the cheerful face and entertaining conversation of the lad, but she was hopeful that he would come to see them—as he hinted he would do—very often. For, although old Blount and his excellent wife treated the girl very kindly, they were too old to be very agreeable associates for her.

Katrin had now come to be nearly seventeen. She had as yet been but imperfectly educated. However, she had made the most of her opportunity, and was not a dull scholar. Yet, as she came to womanhood, it was desirable that she should become more accomplished, for she was growing to be very beautiful—her mind was good, and she was anxious to study and improve herself.

One day she broached the subject gently to her aged protector.

“All the girls of my age, Mr. Blount,” she said, “are far ahead of me in general knowledge and accomplishments. I wish I knew as much as the captain’s daughters do, and could embroider and play the piano, and converse as prettily and intelligently as they can.”

“You are not so old, darling, as my brother’s girls are by several years,” said her protector. “If I had as much money as he has saved, you would long since have had the benefit of steady, good instruction, and would have been as polished as his daughters are.”

Katrin, of course, regretted the kind old lightkeeper’s poverty, but she availed herself of the advantages that were at hand, studied the harder, and was thankful for what instruction she could get. She was only a poor wail, and “After all,” she said, cheerfully, “what does it matter? I shall never be anything else! What do I want of acquirements in my sphere? It is just as well. But—I do wish Neddy would come again to see us.”

Neddy didn’t come. He quickly became engrossed in his labours in town, and his time was continually occupied in the shop. Whenever he had an hour’s leisure now, by day or night, he devoted it to the development of his pet scheme.

Old Captain Blount watched Ned’s progress in town. He felt a deep interest in the lad’s success, and he often spoke of him in his family.

“Clever fellow is Ned Corson,” he insisted. “He’ll make his mark by-and-by, be sure of it, girls.”

“Did you see him when you were up in London, recently?” inquired Katrin, who chanced to be at the mansion one day when Ned’s name was mentioned.

“Oh, yes, beauty.”

“And is he very well?”

“In excellent health.”

“He hasn’t forgotten us, I hope?”

“I think not, Katrin.”

“Did he inquire for us?”

“He asked after you, I remember.”

“Did he? And you told him, captain—”

“That you were as bright as a diamond—in capital trim—cheerful as a bird and handsomer than ever.”

“Oh, what nonsense!” exclaimed Katrin, blushing. “Now, what did he say? Did he send any word—or message, captain?”

“I don’t seem to remember anything special,” said the old sea dog, provokingly. “No, no. He only said, ‘Give my love to pretty Katrin Delorme, and tell her I’m comin’ to see her shortly’—or something o’ that sort.”

“Then he’s coming down?”

“Yes, by-and-by. He’s very busy just now. Old Bolessey’s got a heavy job o’ work on hand, and employs four or five extra hands. But none of ‘em can do what Ned can—and the old skindint knows it too.”

“I’m so glad he’s coming to see us,” said Katrin, again speaking of “us,” and not of herself.

The captain pinched her dimpled cheek, and laughingly said:

“You like the locksmith’s apprentice, Katry, eh?”

“All the girls here like him,” she replied, shyly.

“Why not, captain?”

“They should, indeed. He’s a bright lad—a good boy, and he’ll make a good man.”

But Ned was busy, and he did not come back to the old country home.

Katrin watched for him, waited patiently, hoped for his return, but months passed away, and still Ned did not show himself.

Had he forgotten Katrin Delorme? Not at all.

The hard-toiling apprentice gave himself no time for recreation of any kind. All day long he stuck to the shop. Old Bolessey afforded him no relaxation. He was too busy. Bolessey was making money now. Never before in his experience had he been doing so well. And his faithful, earnest, plodding, accomplished apprentice was his best and ablest helper by far. The boy had no time therefore to think of sought-for business. His evenings he spent upon his

own darling scheme, which was being developed slowly but satisfactorily. Nobody knew aught of his secret and least of all his employer. It went forward, however.

He completed his working model and then commenced to make a large safe lock of polished iron and steel.

It was his first instrument, complete, upon the principle he had himself discovered and wrought out.

But this job was a work of time. And though it moved along months elapsed before he finished it to his mind.

Then he had got to be past twenty years old. In less than another year he would be free.

Free legally, free from farther apprenticeship bondage, free from old Bolessey, free to go and come and do as he liked, free to announce the result of his years of study, toil, experiment, and brain-work, and free to enjoy the benefit of his steady application and genius.

As he occasionally thought of all this he remembered also beautiful Katrin, and then he thanked Heaven for his bright prospects, took fresh courage, and went straight forward.

His exacting old employer did not fail to observe the growing usefulness and enterprize of his faithful apprentice, but he took care never to mention what the generous sea-captain had done to push on his fortunes.

(To be continued.)

RED HELM.

CHAPTER XI.

BOTH Faith and the cabin boy, who were by this time quite hungry, were glad to obtain the fruit, and also to hear that it was so plentiful in their vicinity.

The three ate heartily; then Brenton and the cabin boy went forth to obtain leaves to make a couch upon which Faith might obtain the rest she so much needed.

There were plenty of large leaves to be plucked from the trees, which, in some places, grew quite low on this island, and a sufficient number having been at last collected by them they returned to the cave, and soon prepared a couch for the young woman.

“We will keep watch outside while you sleep,” said Brenton.

Faith, however, endeavoured to persuade Brenton and the cabin boy to first go to sleep while she stood watch.

Brenton would not consent to this, and with the boy he left the cave to stand watch.

The two had not been long at their respective posts when both fancied they heard a rustling in the shrubbery not far distant.

“Stay where you are,” said Brenton, in a low voice, “while I go forward and ascertain the meaning of that noise.”

Accordingly he hurried forward, and, creeping through the shrubbery a short distance, lay still and listened.

At first he heard no repetition of the noise, but soon he fancied he caught the gleaming of a pair of eyeballs, which were like sparks of fire in the shrubbery.

Clutching his dagger firmly, he rushed towards this object, and, stretching out his hand, caught at something, to which he held firmly.

“Let me go! me no make harm. Me lost way in the woods!” croaked a boyish voice.

Brenton drew the speaker into the moonlight, and discovered that he was a Malay stripling not more than thirteen years old.

“You say you lost your way in the woods! Why then were you sneaking about here, watching us?”

“If you let me go, me tell! Me too much frightened while you hold me.”

Brenton at once released the lad.

“Me lost my way,” repeated he. “Me hear somebody walk here, and so me look to see if not my friends.”

“I have no doubt your friends are lurking somewhere about here,” said Brenton, “and are only awaiting your return and report to come here and pounce upon us.”

“No—not so,” answered the boy, in a truthful, ingenuous manner, which almost dispelled the suspicions of the young man.

“Where were your friends when you last left them?”

If the boy at first seemed a little disconcerted at this question he quickly recovered his self-possession, and answered, calmly:

“Three miles away from here, going back to the ship. They not find you, and so they say they go back.”

Brenton looked the boy steadily in the face, half doubting the truth of his assertion.

He turned aside, reflecting on the subject, when he was suddenly startled by a wild cry from the cabin boy—a quick, sharp, warning shriek.

Turning quickly, he perceived that the Malay had drawn a dagger which he was in the act of plunging into his side.

He had but just time to escape the thrust by springing back; then he made a grasp for the lad, who, however, eluded him with the quickness of lightning and darted into the shrubbery.

Brenton pursued a short distance, but he did not care to follow far from the place where he had left Faith.

The boy soon disappeared from his sight, doubtless to join his friends, who Brenton now concluded could not be far distant.

"You had a narrow escape, sir," said the cabin boy when the young man returned.

"Yes, that fellow was as treacherous as a cat. But for your warning cry he would doubtless have accomplished his purpose."

"I saw him just in time. I had my eye on him from the moment he appeared. After you last spoke to him he put his hand to his breast, and then, seeing him draw it quickly forth, I at once divined that he had done so in order to obtain a knife."

"We must get away from here as soon as we can," said Brenton. "The fellow will inform the other Malays soon, and they will be after us."

"So I think," said the boy, "but where can we go now?"

"There is a boat here, fortunately. We will take to that, and trust to the chance of being picked up."

The two entered the cave and awoke poor Faith, who, worn out by her late exertions, had sunk into a profound slumber.

On hearing the bad news Brenton had to communicate the girl shuddered.

"It seems as if there is no rest for us," said she. "I am afraid they will overtake us after we put to sea in the boat. But what are we to do for paddles or oars?"

"There are, fortunately some oars in the boat," answered Brenton, "and the boy and I can pull easily. After we get out of sight of this coast, which is the main thing, we can let the boat drift on. We can do no better as we have no sail."

"True," said Faith, "and may Heaven, which has watched over and befriended us thus far, continue to do so."

"It will," said Brenton, confidently, for his was one of those natures which always look on the bright side of danger or difficulty.

"You have had no sleep," said Faith, tenderly. "You need rest."

"Never mind me," answered the young man. "I can go without my share of sleep occasionally."

They left the cave and at once proceeded to the boat, in which they were soon seated, Brenton and the boy exerting themselves at the oars with right goodwill.

They had thus proceeded about a hundred fathoms from the shore when they heard a fierce yell, and beheld about fifty Malays on the beach, shouting and screaming at them and brandishing their knives and spears.

They soon disappeared, however, to seek their vessel, probably, and start in pursuit.

Meanwhile Brenton and the lad continued to ply their oars with such vigour that, in a short time, they were out of sight of land, the current being now in their favour.

"The wind at present is against the Malays' pursuing us," said Faith. "I wish it would hold so until we can be picked up."

"So do I," answered Brenton, "and I think it will hold as it is until morning."

"By that time we may see a sail," said Faith.

"Yes, we may," answered the young man. "I believe we are about in the track of the East India vessels."

"We are. I know that from observations I have made."

"What is that away off there ahead of us?" inquired the cabin boy.

"That is a sail," cried Brenton, after he had risen and taken a good survey. "I am sure of it, and I hope it may prove a friendly one."

With renewed vigour they again took to their oars, heading their boat directly for the stranger.

As they drew nearer, however, a fog settled on the water, hiding the welcome object from their sight.

"That is too bad," said Faith. "I was in hope we should reach that vessel without any trouble."

"So was I," answered Brenton, "but we may as well continue pulling, as the fog may clear before long."

"It does not often last many hours in these regions," said Faith.

The fog, however, instead of lifting, seemed to become thicker every moment.

Before morning Brenton and the cabin boy stretched themselves in the bottom of the boat to seek repose, while Faith stood watch.

So deep was the slumber of the twain that they did not wake till some time after morning.

"How now?" inquired Brenton, rubbing his eyes.

"Have you seen anything more of that sail?"

"Nothing," was the young girl's sad reply; "the fog has not cleared yet, but, doubtless, soon will, I daresay."

"Hark!" cried the cabin boy, bending his head to one side in listening attitude. "I thought I heard a noise like the creaking of yards off there in the fog."

All listened intently to soon distinguish the sound to which the speaker had alluded.

Faith turned pale.

"I don't like that noise," she said. "I may be deceived, but it seems to me it sounds like the creaking of the yards aboard one of the Malay vessels."

Brenton smiled.

"There is usually but little difference in that sort of noise," said he.

"Yes, but the shape of the Malays' yards, and the way they are fastened in the slings, cause them to make more noise than those of English craft."

"You are doubtless right," answered the young man, "but I hope you may be deceived in this instance."

The cabin boy rose at this moment, peering through the fog.

"There!" he cried—"there she is—a vessel of some kind. I can just make out her sails looming up through the mist."

"Ay, and she is coming this way. Down to your oar, boy, down."

The lad at once betook himself to his oar, Brenton doing the same, and the boat was directed out of the track of the approaching craft.

As she came on her yards and masts soon were quite plainly visible.

"It is one of the Malay schooners," said Faith.

"Pull ahead!" whispered Brenton to the boy, at the same time making such a powerful stroke with his oar that the boat shot ahead some fathoms.

"They cannot see us now," said Brenton; "we had better stop pulling."

This they did, lying on their oars, and watching the half-shrouded hull of the Malay schooner as she dashed on, her crew unconscious of their vicinity.

"We are safe now, I trust," said Faith, when the craft had vanished in the fog.

"Now, if we could only come across that other craft, I doubt not that she would prove a friend," remarked Brenton. "But 'there is no evil without its good,' for this fog hides us from our enemies, who will doubtless be out of sight before it clears."

The fog showed some signs of clearing, for it was now lighted by the rays of the sun, which was high in the heavens, and the wind was blowing freshly.

Half an hour later it began to break here and there, revealing patches of blue sky.

"I hope it will last a quarter of an hour longer," said Brenton, "in order that we may be so far astern of the Malay as not to be discovered."

Eagerly the occupants of the boat watched the mist, as it gradually receded from the surface of the sea.

At last it cleared, and the horizon was visible on all sides.

Far away to leeward a mere speck, evidently the Malay vessel, now was seen, while to windward, distant about a league and three quarters, was the other sail which had been observed on the previous night.

Brenton at once took to his oar.

"Come, my lad, a few more pulls and then we will signal yonder craft, which I have no doubt will pick us up."

The boy readily obeyed, and the boat jogged heavily on her course through the sea.

At length Brenton ventured to make a signal by fastening to the end of his oar a kerchief, which he waved about his head several times.

Ere long this signal was answered by the appearance of the distant vessel's flag at the mainmast head, where it was waved up and down several times.

"We are seen!" cried the boy, joyfully.

"Ay, and yonder vessel is friendly," said Faith.

"I know that by the manner in which she answers our signal."

"I have no doubt of it," said Brenton, "and I trust we may soon be picked up."

The vessel now was seen heading towards them.

As she drew nearer Brenton pronounced her a full-rigged ship—a merchantman—and Faith coincided with him.

"Whether she be English or not I cannot determine," remarked the young man; "but that she will prove friendly there can no longer be a doubt."

The occupants of the boat watched the ship as she came on.

When she was within a league of them they made her out to be an Englishman, as it was the English Jack she had hoisted at her main.

On she came in stately majesty, scattering the water from her noble brows, while her tall masts bent beneath her great spread of canvas.

Faith clapped her hands as joyfully as a child.

"She is doubtless homeward bound," said the young woman, "as she was heading to the eastward when we first signalled her."

"I think as you do," answered Brenton, "and am very glad for your sake, as you will thus see old England again."

Soon after the ship was close alongside, when she came up into the wind with her mainyard aback and several seamen standing in the waist, one of them holding a rope ready to throw to the fugitives.

Brenton caught the rope as it was thrown, and secured it to the bow of the boat.

"Castaways?" inquired the captain, when the three were aboard.

In a few words Brenton explained to the captain, who, being one of those hearty, good-natured old tars often met with in the merchant service, at once sympathized with him.

Soon a pleasant woman came up from the cabin, and was introduced to Faith and Brenton as the captain's wife.

While they were conversing the vessel's mainyard was braced forward, and she was kept on her course towards the East Indies, whither she was bound.

"I trust our perils are over for the present," said Brenton to Faith, when he found himself alone once more with the young girl.

"I hope so," she answered; "but that is something one is never sure of at sea."

Three days later a terrific gale pounced upon the "Lion," the name of the merchantman.

Her fore and mizen topmasts were carried away, and the captain was obliged to run in under the lee of a promontory in the bay of a pleasant island, to save his craft.

While here, all hands, including even the cook and steward, went ashore for a supply of fresh water.

They had not time, however, to fill their casks when they suddenly beheld the ship drifting away from them out to sea.

She had parted her cable, which was not very strong, owing to some defect in the links, and was now being carried rapidly off by the current.

Brenton, the captain's wife and Faith were the only persons aboard.

There was no boat left to them by means of which they could gain the shore, and they were therefore obliged to stand and see the vessel fast leaving their shipmates behind, without the power to get to them.

Brenton, however, had the presence of mind to take the exact bearing of the island and jot it down in the ship's log-book.

Meanwhile the craft, carried on by a strong current, continued to drift, with great velocity, out to sea.

"My husband, my husband!" cried the captain's wife, wringing her hands, "what will become of him?"

The faithful creature, woman-like, thought nothing of her own peril, but only that of her husband, left on a far-away island in mid ocean.

"Don't despair, madam," said Brenton; "the wind may soon change, when I trust we shall be able to get back to the island where your husband has been left."

This afforded consolation to the poor woman, and when Faith also comforted her she dried her eyes and strove to appear cheerful.

Meanwhile the wind was blowing a strong off-shore breeze.

Brenton watched anxiously for a change of wind, but he saw no prospect of this at present.

He went aloft and lowered the main-topgallant sail and the topsail with his own hands, that the craft might gain a good offing, so as to be brought up toward the island when the wind should change.

Ere long a heavy fog, which had been gradually gathering, settled on the sea, hiding the shores of the island from sight.

The captain's wife then seemed more despondent than ever.

Brenton went up on the main yard to peer through the mist, thinking he heard a noise not far distant, as of another vessel approaching.

Leaning far over, with one hand grasping the shrouds, he suddenly beheld the outline of the Malay schooner, scarcely three ships' lengths distant.

(To be continued.)

MEASURING A TREE. — The Canadian way of measuring a tree is said to be as certain as it is grotesque. You walk from the tree, looking at it

from time to time between your knees. When you are able to see the top in this way your distance from the root of the tree equals its height.

MAURICE DURANT.

CHAPTER XL.

Oh, weary heart, that longeth for the day!
Oh, weary heart, that panteth for the night's
still breath!

Where lies the succour? where the solace? Say!
Death! it answers, sadly, Death!

Yea, were I lying where the sun and lies,
A thousand lengthy fathoms deep,

That voice would wake me from eternal sleep,
And, like the last tramp, bid me rise.

Will my readers graciously deign to seat themselves on the novelist's magic carpet, and let it carry them—whither?

To a wide expanse, limitless as far as the eye can see, a world of bright blue sky, spangled with stars and lit up by a glorious moon, whose rays fall upon a boundless carpet of magnificent flowers.

Flowers to the right, flowers to the left, flowers as far as the eye can reach: one boundless prairie of Heaven's earth-jewels, one splendid meadow, soft as velvet, dazzling as a cluster of precious gems without an owner save the solitary trapper, the fleet-foot Indian, or the wild animals that browse upon its bosom and fly across it with swift foot at the approach of man.

While we gaze lost in wonder and awe three specks appear in the gray horizon and gradually grow nearer.

They are horsemen—rough, sturdy sons of the prairie and the mountains, tanned by the sun, hardened by the continual struggle for the necessities of life, trained to deeds of daring by their incessant warfare with deadly and never-ending foes.

Attired in garments composed of rough calico, the hairy skins of the prairie wolf, and the tanned hide of the buffalo—the animal which provides them with both food and clothing—their rough heads covered by caps cut from the hairy coat of the deadly grizzly bear, and their legs cased in moccasins, stripped from Indians that had fallen beneath their smooth, shining rifles, these Mexican trappers look fiercer than the beasts, and by the tawny sons of the forest are more dreaded.

Coming along at a speed which only a Mexican horse could maintain, and only a Mexican—the finest rider in the world—or a trapper, could sit through, steed and rider seem one, yet as they dash through the bright-hued flowers they could at a word bring their flying horses to a halt and fling themselves from the saddle.

Beyond them, glistening in the rays of the summer moon, lay the Rocky Mountains, whose summits are always hoary with eternal snow, whose holes and caves are the homes of the brown and the fearful grizzly bear.

Making direct for this high range of mountains, the three riders skirted a little to the left, and, suddenly pulling up beside a bright, shallow stream, which meanders through low rocks and round the base of a clump of dark trees, leapt from their horses, and two of them commenced, without a moment's delay, to cut down some dry branches wherewith to make a fire, while the third fastened the bridles of the horses by means of pegs driven into the ground with one heavy blow of his axe.

While one tended the fire, heaping up branch after branch, and piling stones round it in the shape of a round stove or grate, the other two unsaddled the horses and took from the capacious saddle-bags some dried buffalo hams and bread, and proceeded to erect a gipsy tripod over the crackling blaze.

From this tripod they suspended a piece of rope, and stuck huge slices of the buffalo meat upon a hook attached.

This done, and three flasks filled from the stream, the men threw themselves down beside the fire—their rifles close at hand—and watched their supper cooking.

Neither of them had spoken as yet, each going through his allotted share of the work with taciturn earnestness, but, now that they were stretched at full length, one of them, the tallest, looked up, and, addressing the man who had been tending the fire, said:

"Carlos, how came you to miss the old one?"

"Ask it when you see it—I can't tell. I'm not used to running 'em; eh, Bill?"

"Yer ain't," replied the third, curtly, his keen eyes, hawk jaw, and nasal accent proclaiming him a Yankee, though he rode, shot, and hunted with the same daring and excellence as his Mexican companions. "It's lucky Alph picked the cow, or we'd a-gone supperless to bed, I guess."

"There are more buffaloes this side of the mountains?"

"I calculate not; they air due south now. That's only grizzlies and a browlie now and then up yer."

"Hum!" granted the Mexican called Alph. "I have seen the Great Hunter drop one on this very spot."

"Ay, ye might, but why?" retorted the Yankee. "Why, cos he'd druv 'em from the south. Yer may star, but I'm speakin' tarual truth. I've see him hunt a head 'cross the flow'r prairie till they were druv to the mountains, and there pick his bull and drop 'im."

"The Great Hunter can do everything. Dost mind, Alph, when he dropped the grizzly up beyond the hills?"

"Ay, ay," reiterated Alph. "That were nearly my last b'ar."

"Toll," said the Yankee, curtly.

"Carlos speaks of the time when I joined the trappers down south for buffalo hide and beaver. 'Twere their second trip—and winter. We had halted up stream from the east without luck to speak of, and parted in couples to spread out. Carlos and I were lotted off together. We started for the pine forest, while the snow was coming down like lumps of ice."

"At night we crept beneath the drifts, and covered our heads with our cloak, for fear lest the snow should get to our insides and freeze our hearts. Two days of this, and the horses died; we ate 'em, and got on by tramping. Third day Carlos dropped a red dog, which lasted us another night, creepin' in 'tween the warm skins. Next day we got astray, and was for turning off or back—the snow had ceased—when I heard a roar, and next minute a grizzly was coming down on us. There was not time to do more than fire, but I lodged a bullet in his shoulder. It didn't stop him—worried him up more likely, for he came down like thunder and got me in his arms. Carlos had no more powder; my rifle was beneath me. I said an Ave and gave up quietly; but just as the animal were choking me off I heard a shout, and, looking up, saw a trapper riding a tall best, come dashing up. He was afeared to fire, for the b'ar was twisting round, and he might have dropped me as likely as the grizzly, but when he came close he leapt down, and, swinging his axe round his head, struck the b'ar 'cross the nozzle."

"It dropped me like a hot coal, and turned on 'im, but he, quick as lightning—I never saw it better done—cut with a long bowie and ripped the beast up. Before the claws did more than take the skin off his back it dropped dead as a nail."

"When I come to be was gone, but Carlos had seen him before—there's no forgetting him—and said it was the Great Hunter."

The Yankee took down one of the slices and commenced eating, the others following his example.

"Seen him since?" he asked, after five minutes' eating and staring at the fire.

Carlos nodded.

"Ay, thrice. Once with a couple of redskins tracking a painter, once scouring across the hills after deer, and another time sitting beside a stream watching for beaver. Always alone, excepting for the dog—dog never away."

"I remember once," said Alph, taking a flask of spirit from his pocket, and, after drinking from it, handing it to his companions; "I remember once, when the Reds were on the war trail, that if one mentioned the Great Hunter's name they uttered a yell. He never misses, never forgets, and shows no mercy to a foe. But a friend—well, it ain't a grizzly or a handful of redskins that will stop the Great Hunter if one needs him."

"When did ye hear o' an last?" asked the Yankee.

"Five years back, before the great flood. Since then no man has seen him. The redskins say a grizzly dropped him across yonder. Out Wabe, the gray-haired trapper, says he lives still, and will come to the prairie once more; nay, more, Red Serpent swore by his father's grave that he saw him, this fall, down by the White River, snarling?"

"Can't believe Injuns," said the Yankee.

"Ay, truth never touches their tongue," replied the Mexican, filling a short wooden pipe with black York River, and lighting it with a brand.

The others followed his example, and soon the fragrant aroma of tobacco joined the smoke of the wood fire.

For half an hour they smoked in silence, then, one by one, they curled themselves up in their blankets and rolled over, grasping their deadly rifles, to sleep.

Suddenly, before a couple of hours had elapsed, the American raised his head, and, lifting his rifle, sat up in a listening attitude.

The slight noise he made roused his companions, and in a second all three were listening intently, rifles grasped and eyes on the watch.

"Coyote," said the Mexican, meaning the prairie wolf.

The Yankee shook his head, and, listening for a few seconds longer, said, suddenly:

"It's a dog."

Instantly the three crept a little distance forward and fell full length, with their rifles pointed in the direction of the noise, ready to strike death at a single shot, if need be.

Clearer and clearer came the peculiar blowing of the animal and the regular sound of its four feet upon the flower-ground, and in a few minutes a huge mastiff bounded at them, and gave forth a savage growl.

The next minute a horseman flashed into the bright moonlight, and, flying down towards the three trappers, called the dog with one sharp, ringing cry.

The dog bounded back, uttering a peculiar noise, and the horseman, evidently understanding it as a warning, pulled up short and half raised his rifle.

As they pointed their death-dealing weapons at his clearly defined form they could see every feature in the bright moonlight.

"Ho-oh! Don't let 'ee see a feather o' ye, or he's off. It's the Great Hunter!" whispered the Mexican, who had recognized him at a glance.

The horseman thus motionless was splendidly made, with a tall, lithe figure set off to the best advantage in the rough costume, half trapper, half Indian, the hair tufts to his legs and scarce flying in the wind, that also swept the long black, wild, unkempt hair from his grand face, which was splendidly shaped, though much less tanned than a trapper's usually is, and bore marks of suffering and hardship in the dark lines round the stern mouth and deep-set, flashing eyes.

For three minutes he stood motionless, then, springing his magnificent horse forward, rode towards the object which had excited the dog's suspicion.

As he came close on to them the three men sprang to their feet, and, lowering their rifles, stood at his horse's head.

The Great Hunter, for that was the only name the trappers and Indians knew him by, raised his broad-brimmed Spanish hat and touched his breast sharply, while he called the dog to his side.

"How many?" he asked, in low, deep tones.

"Three," replied Carlos.

"Trapping?" asked the horseman.

"Hi," said the Yankee. "Air you for 'er?"

The horseman shook his head, and pointed to the fire.

"Have you meat?" he said, wearily.

"Ay, ay!" said the three, eagerly, in a breath. "Buffalo steaks. Will ye join?"

The horseman nodded, and rode forward towards the fire, the three men exchanging meaning glances as they followed.

Merely throwing the bridle across his horse's mane, the Great Hunter sat down beside the fire, silently looking at the steak which the Mexican, Alph, placed on the hook.

When it was done he ate about half of it and gave the rest to the dog.

Then he rose, walked towards his horse, and returned to the fire with the bridle on his arm.

"If skins are what you seek," he said, addressing the three trappers, "try eastward, by the Squaw Fall; this is one from the Hollow, and, taking a valuable fur from his saddle-bag, he placed it on the spot from which he had just risen, and, with a graceful wave of his hand, sprang upon the horse, called to the dog, and rode away at a swift gallop.

"That's him," said the Mexican, Alph, picking up the skin, "and that is always how he goes. Never a word too much—and always a fur or a piece of gold."

And he crossed himself devoutly.

Meanwhile the horseman rode swiftly on and, gaining the thick pine forest dismounted from his horse and entered it.

As he did so a panther sprang past him—the dog with a growl darting after it.

The huntsman's eyes lit up, and he raised his rifle.

A sharp clang, a fierce yell, and the panther dropped.

The hunter reloaded, calmly beat his way through the undergrowth, and knelt down beside the dead body, over which the dog was standing growling.

"A fine fur," he muttered. "T'll serve to pay for another supper when food runs short."

With a sigh he took out his long bowie and commenced skinning it, occasionally pausing in his task to listen to the howl of the wolves and the whiz of the bats.

When the skin was separated from the body he flung it across the horse's back, wiped the bowie knife upon the high thick grass, and once more went on his way, the horse and dog following in his footsteps.

After half an hour's wandering round the thin part

of the forest the solitary huntsman emerged at the foot of a low range of hills.

A stream lay in his path.

Calling the dog to his side and removing the saddle and skin from the horse, he swung them across his arm, and pushing aside a bush that hid the mouth of a cave, entered, and threw down the saddle and the skin upon the floor, which was partly covered with dry grass and undergrowth.

Raking this together into a corner, the huntsman threw himself down at full length and closed his eyes.

But though he had ridden far and fast, undergone enough hardship since he had last lain full length to weary an ordinary man to death, sleep would not visit him, and with a weary sigh he rose and wandered into the open air.

There, standing with his grand, sorrow-marked face towards the fast-falling stars, his thoughts found words, and unconsciously he murmured:

"Nearly two years! Who would have believed it so difficult to forget? It seems a lifetime since that short dream mocked me into a false happiness. Happy!—ah, was ever man happier? I was heaven on earth! Now," and he groaned as he looked round at the dark forest, the heavy mountains, and the drear stillness broken only by the hard breathing of his dog and the slight movement of his horse's head amongst the grass—"now it is life and torture! Oh, Heaven, that I might die! Thou knowest how I have sought death in a thousand shapes, a thousand forms, thou knowest that I held my hand when I might have taken the life my mother cursed me with, but yetthy mercy would not send by death's own hand the glad release from this never-ending agony, this never-dying memory of the past! Where is she now, I wonder? Is she dead? If so, perhaps from one of those stars she looks down and weeps for me. For surely her pitying heart cannot be glad if her gentle eyes can see me here, alone, praying for death that I may be near her or find forgetfulness. Oh, Maud, Maud! if thou livest I pray Heaven to send thee happiness—I, who never prayed for myself, pray for thee—pray for thee!" and, dropping his head upon his heaving bosom, his closed lips muttering some indistinct words, he walked slowly back to the cave, and, throwing himself upon the bed of fern and grass, once more sought sleep.

This time it came to him, and gradually the lines upon his face softened, his mouth quivered, and he fell into a deep slumber.

Presently, however, he tossed from side to side, and his lips moved rapidly, and suddenly with a groan he sprang to his feet, and with starting eyes and white face cried, while he parted the tangled hair from his forehead:

"She called me! My Maud! I come!—I come!—I come!"

Still calling upon her name, with trembling fingers he added the horse, springing upon its back and dived across the plain as if the prairie belted him were on fire and the flames already snatching his horse's hoofs.

CHAPTER XII.

My Death shall wait beside the door,
Nor stay, although he look for her.
And they lived happy ever afterwards.

Old Fairy Tale.

THE rays of the setting sun stole through the face curtains of the sick-room and fell across the bed and upon the group around.

Seated at the head, looking more beautiful than ever, though sad and sorrowful, was Lady Carlotta Chudleigh, her arm sustaining the pillow upon which rested the lily-like face of Maud.

On the other side of the bed stood Sir Fielding, his eyes moist, his lips quivering. The sad years that have passed over his head since we saw him last have weighed down his shoulders and turned his gray hair to a perfect white.

By him stands Chudleigh and Lady Mildred, both with wet eyes and sorrowful faces.

At a small table leans the physician, pouring out a glass of medicine.

Every minute or so he looks towards the bed and then at his watch.

No one moves, and for some time no one speaks.

Then Sir Fielding walked noiselessly round the bed and whispered tremulously to the physician.

The doctor shook his head.

"I cannot tell whether she is better or worse," he replied, in a low voice. "She may lie like this for days without a change. When it comes, Sir Fielding, it will be the crisis—the turning-point one way or the other."

"She is so weak," moaned the sorrowing father, while the tears coursed down his cheeks.

The doctor shook his head regretfully.

"She is, she is," he said. "Who could be sicker with so long and wasting an illness?"

Sir Fielding walked back, and the physician stole to the bedside, and bent over the lovely face that might be an angel's before the sun quite set, and watched the lips closely.

"She has not spoken—the lips have not moved?" he asked of Carlotta, anxiously.

She shook her head sadly, and whispered back:

"No; she has not spoken since the night, a month ago, when she called for him."

The same sun that smiled upon poor Maud's wasted face lit up the road from London, and fell in a bright, glorious stream of crimson upon a horseman, who, with the perspiration pouring from his face, urged his steed with lash and spur almost to racing pace.

At the foot of a hill leading to the next town of Warrington he slackened pace—of a necessity—and, lifting his soft, wide-brimmed hat from his brow, muttered:

"Nightfall before I can reach it. What in Heaven's name possesses me? Am I mad? The people look at me as if they thought me so! What am I tearing like a demon along the road—what—Ah, 'tis useless. How can I argue with the intense longing, the maddening desire to reach the place? Since the night I heard her call the longing has consumed my soul like fire. If she be dead—Away with the thought! or I shall be mad indeed."

Having reached the summit of the hill, he once more urged the horse at its full speed.

At a toll-gate the man, before he stooped to pick up the coin the bespattered horseman threw him, stared with astonishment; the landlord of the wayside inn, a mile beyond, called his wife to stare after him; a passing waggoner shouted to him to stop; and a mounted patrol tried to bar his way; but, like a man riding for life, he looked neither to the right nor the left, but sped on.

The sun sank and the clouds of night rolled up thick and majestic.

The tired, jaded steed commenced to breathe painfully and falter at the bit, and, groaning aloud, its rider, at last obliged to acknowledge to himself that the animal could go no farther, pulled up at the lighted window of a little cottage, and dismounted.

The next him was a mile on. He must lead the exhausted steed on, and leave it there till it could be fetched. There was no fear of its straying, even now it staggered as it stood and looked ready to fall.

While he stopped for one moment, deciding what course to pursue, the cottage door opened, and a man walked hurriedly out, saying:

"Ah, doctor, you be come at last; only just in time—only just in time!"

The horseman turned, and the man seeing his mistake touched his forehead, and, staring at the foaming steed, said:

"Beg pardon, your honour; but I thought it were the doctor. We have sent for him and the pillion, for a body as is likely not to need any on 'em if as be as they don't come quick."

"Dying?" said the horseman, with a hesitating look that gave place to a groan as his conscience reminded him of his duty.

"Ay, nigh dead, sir. I'm thinking that he's only kept up through having made his mind up not to die till the pillion comes. He seems a good bit enervated on his mind, and do keep moanin' and squeemin' like that I do wish the pillion 'ud come."

The horseman's head sank upon his breast, then he looked at the horse and up the road wistfully, and with an impatient sigh said:

"I am a clergyman, my man. I will see the dying man if you wish."

"Thank be, sir," said the man, evidently not expecting a clergyman in such mud-bespattered gaiters. "Praps you'll walk this way, sur."

The traveller tied the bridle of the horse against the wooden fence, and followed the man into the cottage.

For some few moments the dim light did not reveal the low bed and the dying man stretched upon it, and when the traveller saw them he removed his hat and walked towards its head.

A woman in the room at that moment stepped before the candle, and so thoroughly obscured the man's face.

When he heard the approaching footstep the dying man raised himself on his elbow and gasped:

"Are you the priest?"

The traveller started slightly at the voice.

"I am a clergyman," he said, gravely.

"Ah," said the dying man. "Not a priest. What is the difference? What matters it? Come closer. So! I—I am dying; going fast. Fever—fever, starvation, and—are you listening?—remember! Remember! He that's killing me before my time. Remember!" and, repeating the word again with an amount of agony, he fell back upon the bed.

The traveller stooped over him and tried to see his face—his own had grown strangely moved—but the light was still hidden.

Presently, while the man still lay recovering strength to speak, and the traveller stood watching, the door opened and two persons entered—the clergyman and the doctor.

The owner of the cottage hastily explained the state of affairs, and bowing courteously to the motionless figure at the head of the bed they approached.

The doctor bending down took the dying man's hand, but at his touch he raised himself again, and, slowly shaking his head, gasped:

"Too late, too late! I—I—want the priest; the priest!"

At this the traveller drew back, and the priest, who had just entered, took his place.

"Father!" gasped the dying man, clutching at his hand.

"My son," replied the priest.

"I am dying—dying fast. Holy Mary, spare me until I have confessed. Father, listen—no, no, let them stay. I want them to hear. I want—Listen! My name is Lorenzo Spazzola. Ah! who is that?" he gasped, as the traveller suddenly started, uttered a low cry, and bent forward for a moment.

"Nothing, my son; proceed," said the priest, who had not noticed the cry at the announcement.

"I—I am Lorenzo Spazzola, an Italian—"

Here he breathed hard, and looking at the doctor signed for him to write.

The doctor took out his note-book, and wrote down the statement word for word as it issued from the panting lips.

"I wish to confess, before I die, my sins, especially two great sins. I—Holy Mother! Father, I shall die before—before I— Write, write. I am the husband of Felice Faustine, who died, was murdered, two years ago in the Black Pool at Grassmere! Write, write! Quick! Hold me up. I—"

wo—plotted to marry her to a rich young Englishman. She was a fiend, a beautiful fiend, fond of drink, faithless; I was tired of her! He a mere infant at Venice. She lived as his wife, and, maddened by her bad conduct, he fled from her. I planned this. I followed him to England, followed and tracked him. I forged her certificate of death, took it to his house one stormy night. I—Holy Mother, give me breath, spare me—these—few moments. Felice, the woman, my wife, traced me here. She wanted to frighten the money from the Englishman, who believed himself to be her husband. She had heard he was to be married, and gave me the slip—came, tramped down to Grassmere, went up in the storm to the great house on the hill, saw him, got him—to walk into the forest with her. I followed, and watched, watched them together in the soaking rain; saw him give her money, waited till he had gone—here the man's voice grew excited and harsh—"tracked her footsteps, and," rising in the bed with uplifted arm, "ran my stiletto through her bosom!"

The priest started, the doctor turned pale, but the figure at the head of the bed stood like stone, immovable, motionless.

The dying man with another effort raised himself and fixed his fast-glazing eyes upon the priest continued more faintly and with greater difficulty:

"I emptied her pocket of the gold, and—dragged her body to the pool, then tramped back to London and hid. I knew I was safe; he went on, a cunning liar distorting his vivid face. 'I know that they would fix the little business on him, and—ah! ah, they did, the idiots. He could not commit murder,—though he fired on me once. They offered a reward for his apprehension, he had fled the night of the murder, thinking the woman was his rightful spouse, but they could not take him—no, no, Lucia is too fleet—too swift to be tracked by such slow dogs! Father, that is all. You have written all, doctor. Give me the paper—hold my hand, I—I will sign it."

The two men, pale and petrified with horror, knelt down, one held the book while the other supported the thin, wasted, blood-stained hand.

The murderer slowly penned his name, "Lorenzo Spazzola," and at the last letter sank back on the bed, struggling for the last gasp.

The priest hastily wrote his name as witness and the doctor his, then looked up and said:

"Is there any other witness?"

The traveller, as if awakened from a trance, stepped forward.

"One more," he said, in hollow, broken tones.

"May I ask your name, sir?" said the priest.

"Maurice Durant," replied the deep voice, solemnly.

As its tones reached the dying man's ears he sprang up in bed, and with starting eyes pointed his lean, quivering finger at the dark, sombre form.

"That's him!" he shrieked, in an agony. "That's



[ON, ON FOR HOME AND LOVE.]

him—Lucan—Maurice—come at last. I knew he would. He has come to take me away!"

With a long, despairing wail the blood-stained soul of Lorenzo Spazzola fled from its miserable tenement.

"Maurice Durant!" cried the doctor, starting to his feet.

"Ay, Maurice Durant, sir," said the traveller, sternly. "Take charge of that confession, sir, as you would your own soul and follow me to the nearest magistrate, Sir Fielding Chichester," and dashing out he leaped upon the priest's horse, which happened to be nearest the door, and sped away.

The doctor, bewildered and half frightened out of his life, got upon the other and galloped after.

Maud's fair face still rested on Carlotta's soft bosom, the loved ones still stood watching round the bed.

The sun sank, the room grew dark, the shaded lamp was lit and the doctor grew anxious.

"The crisis is coming," he said, "coming quickly. If—if—"

"If what?" said Sir Fielding, almost mad with grief.

"If she calls for any one, and he or she is not here or cannot be produced, I cannot answer for the consequences."

Sir Fielding groaned.

"What makes you think she will ask for some one?" he said, in a whisper.

"Because," replied the doctor, "she has always a wistful expression upon her face, a watching, waiting look, sometimes hopeful, sometimes despairing. See, now! I am inclined to think that—ahem—the person's absence has been the cause—not entirely, mind, but the primary, principal cause of the danger. If I am right she will immediately, in coming to consciousness, ask for him."

Sir Fielding hid his face in his hands and prayed. His agony was almost unbearable.

Chudleigh came and placed his hand on his shoulder and whispered some words of comfort. "The worst had not come—she was still alive; while there was life there was hope," striving to gain consolation and strength from his own words.

And the sorrow-stricken father once more returned to the watching.

Presently Carlotta lifted her disengaged hand—the sign agreed upon between the doctor and herself—when Maud moved.

The doctor glided round and sank on his knees beside the bed.

"She opened her eyes for a second," said Carlotta, the tears streaming from her own.

The doctor nodded and looked anxious.

"Sh—sh!"

The large, mournful eyes opened once more and fixed themselves on Carlotta's face.

At that moment a noise was heard in the courtyard, and Sir Fielding turned angrily, fearful lest the slightest sound should disturb the beloved child, and bent forward.

Keeping her eyes fixed upon Carlotta's face, the beautiful girl murmured, faintly:

"Has he come?"

Carlotta's tears dropped fast, and her bosom heaved. "I dreamt he was coming—I heard his voice. I am sure he is coming. If he is alive he would not be so cruel as to let me die without kissing me; if he is dead he is the angel Heaven is sending to carry me away, and I shall be in his arms, against his breast once more when I am dead—"

Sir Fielding hid his face.

Chudleigh sobbed like a child, while Lady Mildred left the room, unable to bear the scene longer.

The sweet, faint voice died away, and the thin, snow-white hands crossed themselves upon the lily-like breast.

They thought that Heaven had taken her, but Carlotta still held her against her bosom, and suddenly the large eyes opened again, and the lips sent forth a low, wailing cry:

"Maurice! Maurice!"

Before it had died away the door opened noiselessly and a tall, mud-bespattered figure, with white face and flashing eyes, sprang toward the bed, thrust Carlotta away, and, clasping the lovely form to his breast, murmured, with a flood of tears, in a voice broken by sobs:

"Maud—my darling—I am here!"

She fixed her eyes upon his face with a glad smile and with an effort placed her white arms round his neck, and, leaning her face upon his breast, murmured:

"I knew Heaven would send you, Maurice—I knew Heaven would send you alive!"

"Live!" exclaimed the doctor, half an hour afterwards, as he grasped Sir Fielding's hand and wrung it nearly off in a vain attempt to keep the unprofessional tears back, "of course she will. There's no earthly reason why she shouldn't live to be as old as you or I."

We have a suspicion that all we say after this our readers will peruse somewhat impatiently. "When a man's tale is told," says an old proverb, "he should go and hang himself," but we feel within our heart

that though very near our end there is still a vestige of our task left unfinished, and novelists have their ideas of duty as well as other men.

Let us then, in almost as few words as we have needed for our apology, assure our readers that the doctor's words proved true, and that Maud Durant, with her husband and a sweet-faced copy of herself can be found either at the Rectory or the Hall all the year round. There will be no difficulty in finding them, for it is only needful to mention their names at any of the cottages for ten miles round to bring down a blessing upon their heads and learn their abode.

The Retreat too, the home of Mr. Chudleigh—not yet baronet, thank Heaven, Sir Fielding being as well and hearty as ever, having changed little save in transferring his love for his books to his little golden-headed Maud, who calls him "grandpapa," and is happier sitting on his knee than anywhere else—the Retreat, I say, is a well-known place, and the Right Honourable Mr. Chichester—he is a great statesman now—and Lady Carlotta are as well beloved and very nearly as popular as the Durants.

They have a bright-eyed girl and a Turk of a boy, who has already fallen in love with his cousin Maud and generally addresses her as his little wife.

The Folly, that monstrosity which so long annoyed Sir Fielding, exists no longer, having been purchased and pulled down by Mr. Durant, who is reputed to be as rich as an Indian nabob, and, judging by the way in which his strong hand never falters in its magnificent charity to all who come within its reach, report this time does not speak falsely.

The former owners of the now vanished Folly have taken their wealth and pomposity to a well-known watering-place, at which their two daughters, each "my lady" now, are the reigning queens. We hope the Gregsons are happy, but, judging from the little experience we have had—not personal, we confess—of the sort of happiness enjoyed by persons who think it is only to be found in money and prosperity, we doubt it.

Master Tom has married the barmaid at the "Annaleigh Arms," a showy girl, whose chief recommendation to him was her extreme weight and confidence, and he has managed to win a small handicap at a well-known race meeting.

Of course Mr. Gregson cut him off with a shilling wrapped up in an anathema, and his mother and sisters are not allowed to hold any communication with him. But he does not care a "pony" for that, he says, and declares he is happy in his own way.

And, after all, no one can be more than that in this world.

THE END.



[HUNTED DOWN.]

THE MYSTERY OF FALKLAND TOWERS.

CHAPTER I.

The plover's scream rings shrill and harsh,
The mists are rising above the marsh,
Like the labouring breath of the battle air,
When the souls of the murdered thicken the air.

A wide, steaming, sparsely wooded, desolate marsh lay with the sullen sea upon one hand and a lonely road upon the other; and over the marsh, tolling laboriously to gain the road, wended the solitary figure of a man.

His appearance was indescribably miserable. He was shoeless and clothed in rags. A broken manacle still clung to one of his bare ankles.

His rough-bearded face was greatly emaciated, his eyes hollow and bloodshot with suffering and hunger, and his whole frame shook as with ague.

Men of this kind were not unfrequently sought after and captured in these Romney Marshes, as they are called. The convict ships often anchored off this portion of the Kentish coast, and sometimes the caged criminals made their way to the land and plunged into the morass in a blind, desperate effort to escape.

The man grumbled and groaned as he dragged himself wearily along, and at length, when within sight of the very road he sought, sank down upon a little mound of turf, utterly exhausted.

"Hang the luck that separated me from my pal last night!" he groaned. "With his long head and ready wit he might have piloted us both to safety. Hang him! I'll bet my head he's safe enough himself by this time, with never a thought of me. They told me there was a smithy on this road. If I could only reach it, I know I've money enough to get old clothes and have this infernal iron knocked off my shanks. Oh, Heaven, how it burns and hurts."

He got on his feet again, groaning and quivering with pain, and managed to reach the road.

It was a winding one, but, at one of the nearer turns, he caught a glimpse of a smoking forge, with the red sparks flying out from measured strokes, and something like hope glittered in his poor, hollow eyes as he staggered feebly on.

But at this point he heard the clatter of hoofs, and found himself pursued by a horseman, who came galloping furiously after him, and shouting at the top of his voice:

"Help, help! murder, murder! Stop the ruffian!" The poor man made a weak attempt to plunge into the morass once more, but he was ridden down beneath the trampling hoofs, and the rider—who

appeared to be of quality by his dress and mien—sprang from the saddle.

"Help! murder! help!" roared the gentleman, using his lungs as though his life depended upon their power, though in exactly what peril he stood from the battered being who writhed helplessly and seemed utterly bewildered by the violence and suddenness of the attack it was difficult to understand.

The gentleman continued to cry out lustily, and the smith himself, hammer in hand, followed by several men, came running out of the shop and down the road.

"What be the matter, sir? Did this 'ere tramp try to rob yer?"

"No; but I fear he has done murder. Secure him at once, and give me time to catch my breath!"

"Ay, that we will, sir! Like enough it's from the prison-ship to the gallows you've got this time!"

Released from his first assailant, the convict staggered, to be surrounded by the smith and his comrades, who pushed him roughly about, and threatened him with their brawny hands.

"Hullo!" cried one of the men. "There be some men coming through the fog. They mun be the marines from the prison-ship, comrades!"

They were the marines. Their measured tramp grew louder, their forms loomed out more distinctly from the now thickening mists, and presently an officer and half a dozen soldiers formed part of the group.

"That is the fellow!" said the officer, advancing with a grim smile, and clapping a pair of handcuffs upon the wrists of the man, who as yet had said not a word, and still appeared completely bewildered. "He escaped with a pal last evening, and, though we have missed the keener of the two, we must be content with what we have caught. There's a guinea reward due to the captor. Which one of you is he?"

"That is the gentleman, sir," said the smith, pointing to the horseman, who had had ample time to recover his breath, but who still appeared to be greatly excited.

"I was riding up from Folkestone," said the gentleman, "and just after entering the marshes, about a mile beyond there, I heard repeated cries of 'Murder!' issuing from a heavy clump of timber between the road and the sea. A few moments later I saw this ruffian dash out of the thicket. He threw away something like a bludgeon as he did so, and, dashing over the marsh, disappeared in a lesser thicket near by. Satisfied that some dreadful deed must have been committed, and more intent upon capturing the apparent perpetrator than investigating the nature of the supposed crime, I followed him as well as the nature of the soil would permit.

He escaped me in the lesser thicket, however, and I searched in vain. I was making my way back to the other thicket, from which I had heard the cries, when luckily I saw the fellow, or one like him, near this spot, and making towards the road. I regained the road myself, dashed down it, and trampled him down, at the same time giving the alarm which brought these worthy men to my assistance. I could almost swear that this is the identical person whom I saw run out of the thicket and throw away the blood-stained stick."

"Blood-stained! How do you know it was blood-stained, if yer didn't have it in yer own fist?"

Every one started. It was the prisoner who had spoken.

Desperate, hunted down as he was, he had in some degree regained his self-possession, and the terrible suspicions which were thus deliberately and circumstantially being thrown upon him seemed to inspire him with sudden nerve and acumen.

His accuser seemed taken aback, and then turned red with anger; but the simple question was so sudden and pertinent that every eye was at once turned upon.

"Well," said he, with a short laugh, "if this is a court of inquiry, and I must answer such a respectable examiner as you, my prince of convicts, I do not know that it was blood-stained. My excitement made me throw in the adjective unwittingly."

"Any one might do so," said the officer, satisfied; while the prisoner appeared to relapse into his former state of bewilderment.

As he did so, however, he growled, speaking to himself rather than to any one else:

"I don't know nothin' what the gent's been talking of. I ain't been near onter no thickets, but come straight over the marshes from the sea."

"This must be looked into at once," said the officer, brusquely. "Men, it's too late to return to the ship to-night, as the tide is out, and the quicksands bare by this time; so we'll quarter in the village until morning. The prisoner shall be guarded in the smithy—there, while three of you accompany this gentleman and me to the spot he speaks of."

"With all my heart," cried the horseman. "Let us unravel the mystery at once."

"Might I ask your name, sir?"

"Guy Falkland," replied the other, after some hesitation.

"Falkland! It is a noble name in these parts."

"I know it, and am therefore proud of it," said the stranger, imperiously. "I have been abroad for many years," he added, with more condescension, "and was on my way to Falkland Towers, to visit Lord Falkland, my uncle, when this troublesome interruption occurred."

Every one fell back with instinctive respect. "Will you honour us by leading the way, sir?" said the officer of marines, while the prisoner was being conveyed toward the shop of the smith.

"Certainly!" And the gentleman leaped lightly upon his steed.

The smith, upon regaining his shop, blew up the fire brightly, but did not resume his work upon the anvil.

The prisoner was guarded by the marines in one corner of the shop, and maintained a sullen silence, while the smith's men gathered about him in half-whispered consultation.

"An' think ye there ha' been real moorder done?" said one.

The smith shook his head mysteriously. "An' if there ha' been moorder done," said another, "the prisoner'll na' be sent back to prison-ship, but'll be taken up to the castle, to be examined by my lord, eh?"

The smith nodded his head. "They ought to be in here soon naw," said another, looking out of the door. "The fog be heavy on the marshes to-night, an' it may be dark in an hour. Ah, an' by Jove I believe they be coming now! I see the flash of the soldiers' lanterns in the hollow."

No others looked out, but all awaited in silent suspense.

Mingled with the sound of approaching hoofs they heard the tramp of men, heavy and dull, as if they bore a burden among them.

They entered the grimy little place, and lay upon the ground a lifeless body, over whose face a handkerchief had been cast; but looks of snow-white hair struggled out from beneath its folds.

Every one stood around it for some moments in speechless horror.

Then all eyes were turned instinctively from the body to the forlorn creature under guard.

A flash of the nerve he had formerly displayed seemed to return to him.

Not being restrained, he walked forward as steadily as his feeble condition would permit, until he stood directly at, even touching the feet of the corpse, and looked down upon it without flinching.

"I'm a poor, miserable cove what never had no learnin', and as was brought and bred up all my life in vice and crime," he said, lifting a gaze which came strong and earnest from his hollow eyes, "but as Heaven is my witness I never killed no one in my life, and I never before set eyes upon this poor, forlorn body. Amen."

Friendless, utter demoralisation as he was, there was a species of dignity in his utterance; and even the rough smith regarded him with some respect.

"I am near dead with cold, hunger, and want of sleep," continued the prisoner, speaking more feebly, "an' whatever yer do with me, if yer'll let me sleep for a few hours before this warm fire I'll bless yer in my heart."

He did not wait for permission, but threw himself at length on the blackened earth, alongside the corpse, and between it and the fire; and in a few minutes was breathing heavily in the profound slumber of extreme physical exhaustion.

The slumber was no counterfeit. He seemed to sleep as soundly—almost as solemnly and acrorely as the still figure of the murdered man beside him.

"Can no one recognise the body?" said the officer of marines, breaking the silence with an effort. "I have not yet deemed it advisable to examine it for any papers that may be upon it, and the face is disfigured out of all hope of recognition."

"Oh, it is horrible—too horrible," groaned the stranger, whose face was now noticed to be white as a sheet. "From his garb he was also a gentleman of high quality."

"Gentleman?" said the smith, advancing slowly to the side of the remains, and now for the first time opening his lips; "the prisoner will neither be taken back to the prison-ship nor up to the castle. The murdered man is, or was, my lord, the Baron of Falkland!"

"What! the baren—my uncle?" almost screamed the stranger.

He clasped his hands to his brow, and then fell back in a swoon.

CHAPTER II.

Still, as of old, the sunbeams glance
Along those towers of old romance;
Still, as of old, those towers ring back
The sunbeams from their bastions black.
As down was flung the knightly gear
In the long-vanished feudal age;
Nor modern maid nor modern dame
Can o'er those ancient towers reclaim
From the old memories that fall
Like ivies, 'round each massive wall.

In the dull October weather the shadow of death seemed to linger about the dark old edifice of Falkland Towers, though the pomp of the funeral of its murdered lord was over, and the old baron himself slept with his fathers in the gray chapel at the

lower end of the stately avenue that swept up from the marshlands to the wooded hill upon which the castle itself was situated.

Seated by one of the broad oriel windows that opened directly upon the melancholy woods, and sadly watching the sore leaves in their flight, was the figure of a lady in a deep mourning dress.

She was scarcely twenty, and her graceful blonde beauty would have attracted attention among many thousands of beautiful women.

A firm step on the deep carpet of the chamber caused her to turn her head.

The blush that suffused her cheek was not one of pleasure.

"Well?" she said, in a weary, mechanical tone.

"My dear cousin," said the gentleman who had intruded upon her—and who was none other than the horseman who figured in the first chapter—"I learn with the utmost regret from good Mrs. Prunes that you are dissatisfied with my course respecting yourself. Now, any explanation that you may desire to make I shall be happy to hear. Come, let us be familiar and cousinly, and not so formal and distant in our interviews."

"Sir! I—"

"Pardon me! You will address me as 'my lord,' if you are too ill-mannered to call me 'cousin.'"

"I cannot realise that you are my cousin," broke out Lady Florence Falkland, impatiently. "True, I was but a child when he left us, ten years ago, and you somewhat resemble him as he should be; but he was blithe and merry, while you are dark and stern. I—I do not believe that you are my cousin Guy—in spite of your proofs, I believe you are an impostor, sir!"

She had arisen as she spoke, her eye kindling, and her frame vibrating with passion.

Lord Falkland threw himself upon a sofa, and indulged in a low, sardonic laugh.

He was singularly handsome man, not over thirty-two or three, tall and strongly built, with classic features, and a small, well-shaped head covered with close-curling, jet-black hair.

But his laugh, though by no means harsh, had something peculiarly unpleasant about it; and a certain sinister, unympathetic atmosphere surrounded him, and went with him.

"Now, how creditable a thing it would be for me just to forego my dignity for once, and humour and pet the mettlesome little lady as I used to do ten years ago! I'll do it!"

"My lord seems to be so amused with himself that he will probably be best alone," said the lady, moving towards the door.

"Ha! ha!" chuckled Lord Falkland, stepping before her, looking the door and putting the key in his pocket. "Ha! ha! the same as when a child—the same wild and wayward one!"

Lady Florence stood still, white to the lips, and quivering.

Then she gave way, and, bursting into tears, sank back into her seat.

"Now I know you for an impostor!" she sobbed.

"My cousin Guy, wild and reckless as he was, was always a gentleman!"

"Lady Florence, listen to me calmly," said Lord Falkland, speaking slowly but not severely. "Whatever I may have been, it is not my fault that years of a rough and desperate life have changed me to the moody man I am. You yourself acknowledge the genuineness of the letter from my poor, poor uncle, urging me to return from my wanderings and be once more near and dear to him. The other proofs I furnished—my clear and thoroughly corroborated account of my early past, even to the minutest detail—satisfied the officers of the crown that I was the next male heir to the ancient barony of Falkland; so do not let me hear you insult me again by calling me an impostor."

"I was thoughtless, my lord. I—I did not mean to insult you," stammered the poor young lady.

"Thank you!" said Lord Falkland, with a wave of his hand. "And now let me say to you what my respect for your sorrow—and my own, I may add—has restrained me from saying, since the death of your beloved father and my honoured uncle, the late Lord Falkland. Over a month has passed since that terrible, that indescribably terrible event; and we should both be sufficiently composed to consider our worldly affairs. I was not quite twenty-three when my uncle disowned and cast me from him. I do not say that he did so unjustly. My extravagance, the enormous debts I contracted, and the disgrace I brought upon a noble name, may have been enough to incense even such a kind and forgiving benefactor as he to pitilessness. Penniless, with nothing but my wife and bad habits, I changed my name and roamed abroad, leading the free life of an adventurer. It was a wild and precarious one, the mere epitome of which would fill a volume. There is scarcely a crime in which I have not roamed, with varying fortune; scarcely a phase of existence with which I have not been made intimate. Trust me, it has been a life well calculated to change the light-hearted, careless fellow you remember into the sad

and perhaps austere being you now find me. If it has even changed my features somewhat from the reckless, care-free face I once presented to the world, it is not remarkable. Tears of suffering may channel down the smoothest cheek, and long anguish may compress an average lifetime into a dozen years. At last my beloved uncle's letter reached me in Paris by the merest accident. It was over two years old, but it breathed forgiveness and love, and besought me to come home. Home! home! I scarcely knew what it meant; but, even with the letter in my hand, I remember feeling into a secluded spot to hide the tears that gushed from my eyes as its strange sweetness crept like a caressing hand to my heart."

Lord Falkland paused and seemed to struggle with emotion; and Lady Florence looked at him with both curiosity and interest. She could not like the man—he repelled her constantly; and yet his emotion seemed genuine. His voice was low, but with an eloquent intensity, a swift passion in its tones, which more than made up for deficiency in volume. She felt that he was to be her either an enigma or an enemy—which of them she knew not.

"I hastened home," continued Lord Falkland, "and need not dwell upon the harrowing events connected with my arrival. Now to business. The trial of the miscreant who murdered Lord Falkland developed a number of facts, or rather mysteries, which I am anxious to unravel. It was proved that Lord Falkland, always eccentric, was subject during his later years to fits of almost positive aberration; and that on the day he last quitted his castle here he did so unattended, with the avowed purpose of proceeding to Folkestone, and thence to London, to consult with his legal adviser, and transact other business. His going entirely unattended was considered by the court sufficient proof that he was labouring under one of these moods of total or partial aberration at the time. Another, and even more convincing proof was that he bore with him a small casket containing the family jewels, with the avowed intention of depositing them in the Bank of England. Such remarkable conduct on the part of a personage of his rank and wealth was alone considered incontrovertible proof of his being more or less demented at the time. Another even more convincing proof was that he must have dismounted near the spot where his body was found, left his horse standing in the road—the horse returned riderless to the castle—and gone into the thicket. For what purpose? Did his crazy fit suddenly assume a feature of cunning and secrecy, and inspire him to bury his treasure out of sight? That was left to the conjecture of the court, and the hardened murderer on trial either would or could tell nothing about it. At any rate the body was found and the casket was not—leaving us to conclude that our unfortunate relative had successfully secreted it before his murder."

"Oh, my lord, spare me these cold speculations on my poor father's death," exclaimed Lady Florence, shuddering. "It is a perpetual nervous shock to me."

"But it is necessary, and you must hear me out," said Lord Falkland.

There was a different sort of eloquence in his voice now. It was keen, quick, eager and hard, as though his own nerves were strung up to their highest tension.

"Nothing was found upon the person of the murderer," he continued; "and, though I have had the thicket thoroughly searched, the inference is that the jewels are buried there. It would not be the first time that the cunning of a madman has baffled the shrewdest quest. The escaped convict, and convict murderer of your father, was hanged the day before yesterday. By the way, Cousin Florence, I have to call you to account at some time, and I might as well do so now. I learn with regret, with astonishment, that you have expressed your sympathy in the vulgar belief that that horrible miscreant was innocent of this crime."

"I am accountable to no one for my sympathies and convictions," said the young lady, her cheek flushing; "but as you are so curious I do not for an instant believe he was guilty. His trial was rushed through with indecent and feverish rapidity, and with the exception of his previous criminal character there was not the shadow of proof of his guilt. He had everything to lose by a prolix murder, everything to gain by pushing forward and banishing all observation. His conduct in the smithy alone convinces me that the poor man was innocent of the crime for which he was hanged."

She spoke with spirit and heat, for the manner of her cousin had aroused her indignation.

"Indeed?" sneered Lord Falkland, with an attempt at cool irony, though Lady Florence noticed that he was almost livid. "Why, my dear cousin, you display quite an amount of legal talent. Was, then, was the murderer of the Lord of Falkland Towers?"

"My lord, you surprise and startle me. How should I know?"

"But perhaps you have guessed?" He looked at her as keenly and hungrily as a hawk as he spoke, and the lividity changed to bloodlessness on his cheek.

"You mistake; I have not even guessed," she said, after a considerable pause.

"Oh, then, to resume from where we left off," he said, speaking with much less effort. "We will drop the subject of the missing easel, which is disposed of for the present, though I don't intend to lose family gems worth one hundred thousand pounds, if they're on top of this earth. In addition to the easel, my uncle is said to have taken with him his will, for the purpose of having it revised, altered, or perhaps replaced by a new one."

"I saw him take it with him—he showed it to me," said Lady Florence, quickly.

"Slowly, slowly! You have told me before that you have often read that document. By that will you were left ten thousand pounds per annum in your own right, on condition that you should wed your cousin, Guy Falkland, to whom you had been betrothed. At any rate, in the event of your father's death, you were to remain under your cousin's guardianship until of age. Am I correct?"

"Yes," exclaimed Lady Florence, looking at him with a frightened expression; "but how you should know the purport of a document which is missing with the easel is most mysterious. The will was made years ago, and it was to have it so altered that I should remain my own mistress and independent of my cousin Guy, that my poor father placed it in his breast pocket when I last saw him on earth."

"Indeed!" "The alteration was never made, but the will is gone, and it is as though it had never existed. The law may impose you upon me as my guardian, Lord Falkland, but can never compel me to marry you."

"But the will would have compelled you to do so, or forfeit your ten thousand a year."

"I tell you that I saw my poor father place the will in his breast pocket just before quitting the castle," Lord Falkland said, looking coolly.

"All a mistake, my dear cousin—all a mistake!" said he, rising, and unlocking the door. "Be so good as to follow me and be convinced of your illusion."

He led the way through several corridors, unlocked and opened another door, and entered a small library, followed by the Lady Florence.

"This, as you are aware," said he, "was the late Lord Falkland's private room, and in you old secretary he kept all his papers. I have explored the old cabinet thoroughly; and now, to convince you of your error, here is the will."

He opened a drawer, drew forth a document, brushed it open with a swift hand, and handed it to her.

"You have seen it so often before you will hardly doubt its genuineness," said he, coolly.

"No, no, I cannot doubt it," said she, looking over the will slowly, and speaking despairingly.

Suddenly she dropped it on the floor, and started back from him with a face white with terror.

"What is the matter, cousin?" he exclaimed, in surprise.

"This must have been taken from the body of my murdered father!" she almost shrieked. "There is blood on the will!"

"Blood on the will!" exclaimed another voice.

CHAPTER III.

The snare is set, the plotters met.

The plans securely laid;

Heaven help the wight who feels their might;

Or unsuspecting maid

'T would seem that some by fate become

Of wicked ones the prey;

But through the muck of feudish work

Shines Heaven's eternal day.

THE echo to Lady Florence's frightened ejaculation came from a prim, elderly lady who had just entered the open door of the library, and to whom Lady Florence instinctively turned as if greatly relieved by her presence.

Lord Falkland snatched the will from the floor, and it shook like an aspen in his hands as he bent over it with a blanching cheek.

"A spot of red ink in one corner!" he cried, with a forced laugh.

"It was never there before my father's death," said Lady Florence, resolutely, but with a secret, half-defined terror at her heart, for she felt that Lord Falkland could no longer be all an enigma to her.

"Enough of this nonsense," said Lord Falkland, returning the will to the drawer and relocking the cabinet with a thorough recovery of his self-possession.

"Lady Florence," he added, "the vulgar intrusion of this busy-body here gives me the opportunity to observe that her services are no longer required. Mrs. Prunes, a worthy woman whom I have engaged to take your place, will arrive this evening. You will surrender the keys to her, get your wages

from my steward, and take your departure before morning. Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once!"

He almost pushed her out of the room.

"My lord," said Lady Florence, "do you forget that this good lady has been in the service of our house from her childhood, and that her mother before her found a shelter under our roof?"

"I would farther state, Lady Florence," said Lord Falkland, speaking as though he had not heard her speak at all, "that in Madame La Grande, the lady who will arrive this evening, you will find a companion not only more suitable to your age than the middle-aged and gossiping old creature whom I have just dismissed but one calculated to be a wise preceptress and a prudent friend. She will also bring a new lady's-maid for you, and you will therefore dismiss your present maid at once."

"I shall do no such thing," exclaimed Lady Florence, with flashing eyes and burning cheeks. "And I would have you to know, sir, that, whoever and whatever you may be, with your unknown antecedents at your back, and your blood-spotted will in your possession, I at least am an English gentlewoman, with rights that you are bound to respect."

"Furthermore," continued Lord Falkland, "it is highly improper that you should persist in treating the new servants of the castle with supercilious contempt. At least I am informed that you so treat them by my steward, Mr. Lookley."

"A low ruffian whom my father would not have employed as an under-groom."

"Furthermore, when you wish to quit the castle grounds hereafter, you will please to ask my permission first. I do not doubt but that it will always be cheerfully granted."

"Lord Falkland!" cried the lady, tears of mortification and indignation gushing from her eyes, "do I understand that Falkland Towers, in which heretofore I have had my will—is my own father's house henceforth to be my prison?"

"You can make it a pleasure-house or a prison, cousin, whichever you please," he answered, with a meaning look and a sudden earnestness in his tones. She remembered the will and the red stains upon it, and the terror returned to her heart.

She quitted the room and went—almost fled—away.

"So far well!" muttered the new Lord of Falkland Towers, pacing the room. "Strange, though, that that little speck upon the will should have escaped my first inspection! It will be easy enough to erase it, however. By Heaven! the girl's beauty almost drives me crazy, even when I speak harshly to her. I thought I almost detected some tenderness in her eyes when I gave her that romantic and emotional allusion to my past life. At any rate with such power as I shall have over her until she comes of age—more than a year—I shall indeed be an idiot if she slip through my fingers. If she should succeed in defying me until then, she, coming into property left her by her mother, could afford to let the ten thousand a year slip, and laugh me to scorn. But it must not be."

He rang the bell and a servant appeared.

"Bring me wine, and tell Lookley to come to me at once."

The wine was brought, and, a few minutes later, the new steward appeared.

He was a short, thickset man, low-browed and small-eyed, but with a certain shrewdness of air and manner which one often meets with in born bailiffs and jailers—a mixture of the bully and the slave.

"What is my lord's pleasure?" said the man, bowing low, but at the same time with a mock-humility twinkle of the eye.

"Everything goes well, does it not, Lookley?"

"Couldn't be better, my lord."

"You must have paid personal visits to all the tenantry by this time. How do they stand the twenty per cent increase of rent?"

"Oh, of course, there's no end of squealing and growling on that score," said the steward, affably.

"I've always noticed, my lord, that a jackcrow grants the fonder the more you screw it up. When I was at Botany Bay with you—"

"Silence!" cried Lord Falkland, savagely. "You know that I have you here for a purpose, and must get over that habit of alluding to your infernal past life. What else have you to report?"

"Nothing as will particularly please you, my lord. The folks are all agog down in the village of Falkland there. What do you suppose they saw, or say they saw, in the streets of their town last night?"

"I don't know."

"Nothing more or less than the ghost of that poor chap as was convicted at the last assizes, and scragged the day before yesterday, for the murder of the old—of your late lamented uncle, my lord. They say he walked up and down the streets in his old rags, wringing of his hands and moaning out: 'It wasn't me as killed him! I had nothing to gain by it!—maybe as how the Lord of Falkland Towers had!'"

"Curse them!" cried Lord Falkland, springing to

his feet, and striking his fist upon the table till the decanters and glasses danced. "Who has been putting such fancies into their muddled heads? Of course I had something—have something to gain by it; but does that excuse the red deed which the nameless rascal expiated on the scaffold? What else do the bumpkins say?"

"They say that there's no telling what kind of life the present lord may have led, or into what sort of company he may have fallen. Indeed, there was one old buffer—a sort of old inhabitant like, as has outlived all the roots in the parish—who said as how he had his doubts about you being the real lord at all."

"Keep that fellow in mind, and learn his name and everything about him," cried Lord Falkland, white with rage. "I'll have him in jail, or the poor-house in a week! Whoever heard of such absurdity? You haven't any doubts about my being the real lord, have you?"

"Not in the least, my lord," said the steward, humbly. "You have been Guy Falkland ever since I knew you, and you was always talking about your family, and as how something in your favour would turn up in the long run. I remember now, in Hobart's Town for instance, as how you said—"

Lord Falkland interrupted him by clutching him by the throat, and pinning him against the wall.

"Villain!" he cried, hoarsely; "will you never forget the past while you are under this roof? If adverse fortune cast me in the company of such scum of the earth as yourself, was my blood any less the noble? Bridle your tongue more effectually in the future!"

"Yes, my lord, yes!" spluttered Lookley, clearing his throat as the strong hand of his master relaxed its grip. "I meant no offence, my lord; it was a pure accident, I assure you."

Lord Falkland walked moodily up and down the room.

"Bring me the accounts after dinner," he said; "and we will look over them together."

"Yes, my lord," replied Lookley, rubbing his hands. "I have already looked over the accounts carefully, and, with the twenty per cent. added to the rent-roll, the estate will foot up a clear one hundred thousand pounds a year."

"Good! and the other properties ought to bring in as much more. Leave me now, and order covers to be placed on the table for three."

The steward had hastily departed when a servant announced the arrival of Madame La Grande.

Lord Falkland hastened to the drawing-room. A quick glance of intelligence passed between him and the lady seated in it; and they had barely time to restrain the expression of a more cordial greeting when Lady Florence swept into the room.

CHAPTER IV.

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and their entrances,

And one man in his time plays many parts.

LADY FLORENCE had descended from her apartment sick at heart upon hearing of the arrival of Madame La Grande.

She was completely taken by surprise at perceiving the handsome, graceful woman who rose respectfully to meet her as she entered the room.

"My dear cousin," said Lord Falkland, "let me present to you Madame La Grande, the lady of whom I made mention to you. She comes to the castle under the highest recommendations, and I trust will prove herself worthy to be your friend."

"As well as your very dutiful and humble servant and housekeeper, lady," said Madame La Grande, courtesying low, and speaking in a very musical voice. "I hope I may have the honour and pleasure of winning your friendship likewise."

"My friendship was never difficult to gain, madam," said Lady Florence, prepossessed, in spite of her anticipatory prejudice. "Shall I call my maid, and have you conducted to your room at once? You can see Mrs. Prunes after dinner, and receive the keys from her."

"I—I brought your new maid with me," said Madame La Grande, with a blushing hesitancy of manner, which increased Lady Florence's liking for her.

"I suppose, then, that I shall have to dismiss poor Richards, though I know it will break her heart," said Lady Florence, with a sigh. "But I might as well see the new person at once."

"I will call her. Annette—Annette!" called Madame La Grande, going to the door.

The young woman who entered was as swarthy as a gipsy.

She had intense, flashing black eyes, and a swiftly changing smile which displayed beautiful teeth of glittering whiteness.

"Annette," said Madame La Grande, "this is your noble mistress, the Lady Florence Falkland."

Annette courtesied so respectfully and gracefully, and she was so pretty withal, that Lady Florence could not but be prepossessed in her favour also.

So the changes were at last thoroughly effected in Falkland Towers.

The old faded out, and the new came in; until at last there were scarcely half a dozen familiar faces left in the numerous household.

At the dinner-table Madame La Grande, by her graceful and well-bred manners and intelligent converse, managed to still farther ingratiate herself in the good graces of her mistress.

They had just retired to the drawing-room when a visitor was announced.

"Mr. Romney."

Lady Florence's cheek flushed with pleasure, but Lord Falkland could with difficulty conceal a frown as a young gentleman of manly presence was ushered into the room.

"I am so glad to see you, Ralph," said Lady Florence, extending both her hands to him with almost childish cordiality. "This is Madame La Grande, our new housekeeper, with whom I am already delighted."

The gentleman bowed, shook hands with Lord Falkland, and then entered into a lively conversation with Lady Florence.

He was the only son of Sir Henry Romney, whose large estates adjoined those of Lord Falkland, and he and Florence had been playmates in their childhood.

Lord Falkland soon excused himself, and adjourned to his library to smoke.

He was not long alone. There was a tap at the door, and, immediately following it, Madame La Grande entered.

"I thought you would come," said Lord Falkland, almost embracing her in the exuberance of his greeting, and conducting her to a seat beside him. "Well, how like you our lordly towers?"

"I have never given you half the credit you deserve for your cleverness," said the lady, patting his head playfully. "And you are a real live lord at last, oh?"

"Don't I look the part I play?" said Lord Falkland, laughing. "But what do you think of her?"

"She is the prettiest girl I ever saw, and you will have a high spirit to tame if you would master her."

"Oh, but I will master her!" cried the other. "Her beauty has turned my brain! She shall yet be mine."

A cloud swept over the woman's handsome face. "And what of me?" she muttered; "you were ever turned by the last new face, Guy."

"What, jealous?" said Falkland, laughing. "Tut, tut! Is this how you have come prepared to play your part? Why, is it not a part of the programme? When she is mine she will be but the plaything of an hour, and the wealth and power of Falkland Towers will be for you and me, my love."

"How about the casket of jewels of which you wrote to me? The jewels were to be mine, remember. That was a part of the compact between us."

"So they shall be, if I can ever find them. By Heaven, I can't comprehend it! The old loon must have succeeded in planting them before—before—his—his death; and yet I have had the corpse searched again and again under my own eyes without success."

"Guy," said the handsome woman, holding him off and looking him straight in the eyes, "he hardly could have had time. Are you deceiving me?"

Her glance was keen, but he met it unflinchingly. "Pshaw!" he exclaimed, with impatience; "have we been companions in iniquity for years and yet cannot trust one another?"

"Well, I believe you," she said, after a pause. "Who is the young gentleman who is now in the drawing-room?"

"A young upstart whom I believe Florence to be in love with. He is the eldest son of my neighbour, Sir Henry Romney; and, trust me, he shall have speedy notice to come no more to Falkland Towers. Now tell me of London, and the world from which you freshly come."

Mr. Ralph Romney had left his horse in the village, in order to enjoy the pleasant walk up the grand avenue leading to Falkland Towers.

It was after ten o'clock when, having concluded his visit, he set forth upon his return to the village. The night was clear and bright, and he walked briskly down the avenue.

But, as he passed into that portion which skirted the borders of the marshes, over which the moon shone dimly through the rising vapours, he saw the figure of a man standing motionless beneath a tree at the side of the avenue, as if waiting for him.

"My lord!" exclaimed Romney, drawing back in much surprise—for the man was Lord Falkland.

"Ay, Mr. Romney," said the latter, looking at him sharply, and speaking in cold, even tones. "I had something to say to you, which would scarcely have come gracefully from me while you remained under my roof; so I chose this place and time—strange as they may be."

"What is your desire, my lord?"

"That you from this moment discontinue your visits to Falkland Towers."

"Why, my lord?" exclaimed the young man, with increased surprise; "though in old times, I understand, there was a feud between our houses, we have been on friendly, even intimate terms for generations. In what way have I offended?"

"You have not offended me, young sir; but, as the guardian of my young cousin, I must request you to discontinue your visits. Her mind is yet unformed, her affections, I trust, still unengaged, and I would keep them free until she is of age."

"So far as the Lady Florence is concerned, you may rest easily, my lord; and what you have said impels me to a confession which otherwise I should be loth to make. Know, then, that prior to her father's death I made her the offer of my heart and hand, and both were kindly, but firmly refused. Now we are simply friends—nothing more."

"Nevertheless," said Lord Falkland, who was secretly rejoiced at what he heard, "I beg that you will discontinue your visits—at least for a season. I distrust her—she may wish to send messages to others."

"Shame on you, Lord Falkland," exclaimed the young man, indignantly. "Your cousin is twenty years of age, a woman grown, and a noble lady in every lofty accomplishment. Such espionage on your part is mean—dastardly."

"Dare you speak thus to me?" cried Falkland, furiously.

"Yes; and I mean all I say. Oh, despite your barony, I am as well born as yourself, proud man! You cannot trample upon me as you have upon your tenants!"

"Ha, perhaps even now you bear some message from my cousin?"

"I do not; but were I honoured with such a trust be sure it should be faithfully delivered."

Lord Falkland uttered an imprecation, and thrust his hand in the bosom of his vest.

"Ha!" shouted Romney; "report says truly then that your unknown life abroad was that of a black-guard!"

He sprang forward, and, striking a powerful blow upon Falkland's wrist, the revolver, which the latter had been in the act of drawing, fell from the paralyzed hand.

"I shall keep this as a keepsake of my Lord Falkland's hospitality," said Romney, picking up the weapon.

And he passed swiftly down the avenue. Lord Falkland turned away with a bitter exclamation, and began to retrace his steps in a very unenviable state of mind.

He was skirting the swamp when a figure sprang out of it and confronted him with the suddenness of an apparition.

"The deuce!" exclaimed Lord Falkland.

"No, my lord, only a poor gipsy who may at some time be able to do you a service," said the apparition, touching his cap and bowing obsequiously.

He was a spruce-looking young fellow, quite the dandy for one of his tribe, with eyes that twinkled and glittered like glass beads, and a thin, wiry form that seemed instinct with vigorous health.

"Who are you?"

"Anything you will, my lord—an honest man or a thief—just what you will; in other words, Gipsy Jock, at your lordship's pleasure."

"And pray what do you suppose you can do for me?"

"Well, I can do that snob—who just quitted your lordship so unceremoniously—a bad turn, if need be."

"Can you, my lad? Well, if you ever can and do, just consider that you have done me a good turn, and send in your bill in guineas; do you hear?—in guineas."

"That I will, as I'm a Rommany blade. And perhaps I can be of even more important service to your lordship. Every one in these parts has heard of the missing casket."

Lord Falkland picked up his ears, and his breath came quickly.

"Ha," he cried; "do you know anything about it?"

"Not I; but perhaps Mother Judith does."

"Who is she?"

"The queen of our tribe. She knows almost everything that goes on in these marshes; and sees pretty much everything too."

Lord Falkland started at the word emphasized, and peered eagerly, anxiously into the face of the speaker; but the latter presented to this scrutiny a visage as stolid as a rock.

"Do you think she can give me any clue to the missing casket, my lad? Where can I see her?"

"You cannot see her at all; but I can for you, and will bring you word at the castle to-morrow morning."

"Do so, my lad, and I'll feather your nest with golden plumes," exclaimed Falkland. "Here; let this be an earnest of what I shall yet do for you."

He pressed several broad, yellow pieces in the gipsy's palm, and passed rapidly up the avenue.

The dapper gipsy stood looking after him, with a

broad smile upon his brown features, and then exclaiming, "Oh, Jupiter! if he only knew what a guy he really is," sprang among the trees and disappeared.

(To be continued.)

THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

CHAPTER XVI.

LORD HARRY, in the dreary solitude of his hotel chamber, was doing one of the most difficult tasks of his whole life—writing to Agnes to excuse him from calling upon her as he had designed to do. It was not because his love or his spirit had quailed before Estelle's threats that he wrote this note. Rather it was from excess of pride and conscience.

He had expected to go to Agnes, to repeat the offer of his heart and hand—to avow the whole strength of his love, and to win from her, at last, the sweet, sweet, full acknowledgment of her love for him. He had even thought of pressing her to marry him on the same day when Lady Augusta should wed Mr. Douglas. He had planned all the cunning representations which he should make to her of how much a mistress would be needed at Bramblethorpe Villa after Lady Augusta had deserted it.

Now he no longer felt himself at liberty to carry out the dearest wishes of his heart. How could he, a nameless, almost penniless man, go to the woman he loved and offer her shame and a continuation of that poverty in which she had been reared?—offer her, instead of the proud title of countess, no name at all except that which he could only retain by sufrance?—beg her to share his every unpleasant notoriety?—drag her down, who could choose from the nobles by virtue of her peerless beauty, to a life with him such as might now be his?

He had no right to win her to commit herself to him, unknowing of these circumstances. Neither could he yet explain the coming trouble to her. He must better understand what it was himself. He must have a consultation with his lawyer. He must know on what ground he was standing. It would be cowardly and dishonourable to get from her an avowal of love at present. All things were changed since yesterday. Yet how to make her understand! He dared not even speak of his great love. That would be to commit her. No! he must allow her to think that he was a trifler, or worse—that, after she had as good as confessed to him that she had broken the bond betwixt herself and another for his sake he was so ungenerous or undecided, or Heaven knows what, as to debate and linger and keep out of her presence until he could make up his mind!

His proud soul chafed at the construction which she would be so sure to put upon his conduct.

He groaned in spirit as he drew the paper toward him and took up his pen.

"At best it will be but for a few days that she will misunderstand me," he partially soothed himself by reflecting. "Either I shall prove the falsity of Estelle's statements, and be free to go to Agnes with my explanation, or the public will be rioting over the nine days' wonder of my downfall, and she will guess at the scruples which have kept me from her side."

With this cold comfort he managed to write:

"MY DEAR MRS. MACLEOD,—I have to ask you to excuse me from calling upon you and Miss MacLeod this morning, as I had hoped and expected to do. Business affairs of the very greatest importance prevent the pleasure I had anticipated. You perhaps will easily pardon me, since the greater disappointment must be on my side. I would like to tell you all, for I believe you to be a sincere friend, but I can only say at present that I am in trouble of a serious character. Only matters of the utmost urgency could keep me away from your house this morning. I do hope that Miss Agnes is to stay with you some time. Will you give her my sincere regards, and tell her that I will do myself the justice to see her soon? We leave London this afternoon; but I shall return to it almost immediately. In the meantime believe me your distressed friend,
"HARRY BRAMBLETHORPE."

He had hesitated when he came to sign his name, and finally wrote it as he have given it.

If it was to be proved that he had no right to the title of earl the sooner he dropped it the better he had thought.

At all events plain "Harry" would look warm and friendly; and his poor heart ached to give some sign of the love that was in it, which honour forbade his declaring.

He kissed the places where he had written Agnes's name.

Oh, if she could read those invisible kisses as plainly as those formal, chilling words.

He sealed his miserable little note and hired a messenger to take it to the house.

He anticipated the delay of the post, and that

Agnes might sit long hours expecting him; he would not give her a moment more of waiting than was necessary.

After the missive was despatched he was ready to accompany the ladies on their shopping expedition. It was impossible for him to do any business, and he desired to meet no friends.

All he wanted was to get home, and to have this matter settled for better or worse.

The dreary day dragged onward.

His sisters found shopping for a wedding full of interest and excitement.

They observed his paleness and gravity; but his headache accounted for that. They pitied him and called him "poor darling" whenever they had a chance, in the midst of the hurry of their delightful business.

Their pleasure, their reviving spirits, the thought that all this buying for a wedding might only end in heartbreak and disappointment, caused him to watch these dear sisters as if he knew that they were walking toward an unseen precipice down which they were shortly to be dashed.

His indignation toward Estelle deepened every hour.

It seemed to him an unbearable insult and impertinence that she should keep with his sisters, accepting their friendship and confidence, remaining smooth and quiet, giving advice when asked about this and that article of the trousseau, while in her mind she had resolved upon the destruction of their happiness.

Only the hope that he might yet avert the impending evil prevented him from thrusting her out of their innocent presence.

But he felt that prudence demanded forbearance and restrained himself.

She could hardly have foreseen the full effect of her conduct upon him, else she would have had little hope of compelling him into a marriage.

His contempt was as utter as his anger was fierce. She remained coolly self-possessed, nor seemed to shrink from the result.

All day, before his aching eyes, arose a vision of Agnes sitting in her aunt's parlour, dressed to receive him, watching for his coming, with the softest rose colour rising in her cheeks and her heart palpitating with blissful expectation until the flowers in the bosom of her white dress trembled on their resting-place.

He imagined her—the way in which she had dressed her hair—the colour of her ribbons—the drooping of her head as she sat, waiting and watching, so beautiful, and full of love, ready to respond to his happy declaration which she had so much right to expect. He imagined the change when, instead of himself, came that miserable, unsatisfactory note.

Keen as was the picture drawn by his restless fancy it did not surpass the reality. Agnes had dressed herself with unusual care and with exquisite taste to please him. She had awakened from sleep that morning with a thrilling consciousness of something sweet about to happen before her lids opened or her brain recalled what that something was.

She had fluttered through her toilet, singing low snatches of tender songs, her eyes smiling back at their image in the mirror, her warm fingers all a-tremble with her thoughts.

"I have not looked so well for months," she murmured, when the pretty morning toilet was completed.

"Lord Harry will laugh at the idea of my having been ill. Let him laugh, only so that he does not guess that I fell ailing from nothing but disappointment after waiting and watching for him so long in vain. It will not do to let him know all that at once. It would spoil him! It is so strange that he never should have heard of my breaking off with my cousin at the altar-steps—and all for his sake. Never mind—all's well that ends well. I did right not to marry James when I loved Lord Harry so entirely. Only I thought he might have come to me after that. He knew nothing all this time! Ah! it is not too late yet," and she drew a deep breath like a sigh of joy.

When she went down to breakfast her aunt rallied her on her fine colour and fine toilet, and she bore the raillery admirably, since she could see that the old lady shared her happiness, and was only less excited than herself.

Then her aunt had purposely betaken herself to her own chamber, leaving her alone in the little morning-room; and there she had waited, and had started and blushed when the door bell rang, and, after all this, was only that formal note for her aunt.

Poor Agnes was dreadfully mortified as well as disappointed.

She felt almost as if she had made a declaration of love to a man and had been refused. She had betrayed her heart to Lord Harry so plainly, believing in his feeling for her.

It was some time before Mrs. MacLeod could persuade her to consider Lord Harry's avowal that he was in real, deep trouble and distress.

"I am afraid that is but an excuse, aunt. Rather I believe that now, since he has become earl by his father's death, he has resolved to look for a wife more nearly his equal in rank and fortune. Aunt, you may be sure that is it. I believe that he did know that I was not married, and kept away from me on purpose that I might understand that our relations towards each other were changed. And I betrayed my feelings to him so plainly!"

With a cry of grief and shame the young lady hid her face for a moment on her aunt's shoulder; and when the elder woman began to endeavour to shake this bad opinion of Lord Harry in which she had taken refuge she raised herself and with a quiet dignity declined farther to discuss the question.

If Agnes had been beautiful when, softened and blushing, she listened for her lover's expected arrival, she was not less so under the influence of the wounded pride that gave a flashing splendour to her eyes and a regal haughtiness to her tall form.

"All the blood of all the MacLeods" heated her cheeks as she walked twice or thrice across the floor. Then she seated herself at the piano, and placed a new piece of music before her.

"I will not condemn Lord Harry too hastily," she said, before beginning to play. "Appearances are against him, but we will give him time to explain his conduct. Meanwhile, dear aunt, it will hardly be expected that we shall make ourselves unhappy about him. I am going to try my new music, with your permission."

Her fingers, fairer than the ivory keys they touched, flew over the notes; she appeared all absorbed in her occupation; but the shrewd old lady who sat and listened knew well that the proud heart trembled in the young bosom, giving more pathos to the music than the composer had put there.

Mrs. MacLeod's faith in the honour and loyalty of the young lord remained firm; she believed that she understood his character, and that he was incapable of trifling, false excuses, or any manner of deceit.

Her greatest anxiety was for Lord Harry. He must indeed be in serious trouble to keep away from them at this time.

"The poor lassie has no father now to counsel him. He may have been betrayed into some little imprudence, and no great blame to him. We shall hear from him soon."

Several days passed and they did not hear from Lord Harry.

Even good-natured Mrs. MacLeod began to doubt her favourite's fidelity, while Agnes, pale and again drooping, said often to herself:

"It is but my just punishment. As I treated my poor cousin so Lord Harry has treated me. Ah, James, you loved me, you would have given your right hand for my love. But as I slighted you thus he slighted me. I have ruined your happiness, and have not gained my own. Almost I am minded to go home and ask your pardon. Poor Jamie."

Her own sufferings taught her compassion for the man she had cast aside.

She fancied sometimes, when most depressed, that this was a punishment which she had incurred and deserved for breaking her implied promise to her dying father.

One morning, after a week of suspense and unhappiness, Mrs. MacLeod, scanning the morning paper at the breakfast-table, suddenly cried out at a piece of news which met her eye.

It related to the young Earl of Bramblethorpe, and was indeed of startling interest.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the very day when Mrs. MacLeod, in her little breakfast-room in smoky London, had come upon the article of startling interest referring to the present Earl of Bramblethorpe a curious scene transpired in that Italian villa on a hill of Naples to which we have once before introduced the reader.

It was thirty years since the lately deceased Earl of Bramblethorpe had wandered into that sunny place enchanted afternoon and there encountered his destiny in the eyes of the young Countess Valencia.

This long period of time had not much changed the aspect of the spot, for the youth of nature is eternal.

It was later in the season of the year, and a few dry leaves rustled over the footpaths or dropped into the fountain; but there were still roses flushing the greeneries and grapes purpling on the walls, the deep blue sky was over all, the waters leaped and gleamed in beauty as of old.

The house itself had lost nothing of its air of charming luxury.

It had been kept in excellent repair, even improved by additions and decorations, showing that its owners were continuing in prosperity, whoever those owners now might be.

In a large, airy chamber of this villa a lady lay on a couch drawn in front of an open window. She appeared a miserable invalid, and one could judge from a first glance that her days were numbered. She

was about fifty years of age, and her dark skin was rendered still darker and more sallow by disease.

Her cheeks were thin, her whole body emaciated; but from the still marvellous luxuriance of the long black locks which streamed over her pillow, and the almost unbearable splendour of the great dark eyes looking out from their hollow circles, it could be told that she had once been very beautiful.

Although so broken and exhausted by suffering she retained a worldly look.

Her fine white wrapper was richly embroidered; there was a red rose pinned in the bosom of it, while in her ears, and on her fingers, and at her throat glittered costly jewels.

It was hard for this lady to give up her youth, her beauty, her display of gems and rich attire, her enviable position in Neapolitan society, or a narrow home in the four walls of a coffin.

Her restless eyes, preternaturally bright, proclaimed her reluctance as they glanced longingly, piteously about her.

Yet a large crucifix, studded with diamonds, was clasped in her shrunken hands, while her lips, at intervals, moved in prayer.

An attendant sat near, fanning her with a long bunch of peacock's feathers, and occasionally wetting her parched lips with wine and water.

A sound in the ante-room caused the sick woman to start from a light slumber into which she had fallen—the first after a wakeful night and a long nervous morning.

"Who is that, Marie?" she asked, a little wildly.

"It is the father-confessor, my lady," answered the girl, in a low voice, the tears rushing to her eyes. "You remember you decided to send for him to-day."

"Yes, yes. I cannot have my sins too quickly moved from my mind. Another day may be too late, Marie. It is well he has come," murmured the lady, still with a wild, piteous manner, like that of a hunted animal.

Alas, Death was the hunter, and she could not escape from his toils.

"Your sins are few and light, my lady," said the faithful girl, consolingly. "Still I know the good father can comfort you as no one else can. And now I will go out if you say so, and send him to you."

"Yes, yes, go, Marie. I am so weak—how shall I ever get through with all that is on my soul?"

And the sufferer closed the intolerably bright eyes which it was so painful to others to see so feverish and so wandering.

The attendant stole noiselessly away, and had scarcely left the chamber before her place was filled by a clergyman, who entered as silently as a shadow, and, approaching the bed, looked searchingly down at the pale face.

He had a smooth, round, yellow face, with a merry and rather cunning twinkle of the eyes, and his voice, when he spoke, flowed smoothly as oil from his stout throat.

"Are you sleeping, my child?"

"No, father," and the gleaming eyes opened upon him so suddenly as to startle him. "I was waiting for you."

"Have the physicians pronounced that there is no hope?"

"They have; and I knew it before they told me. I feel death here," pressing the crucifix to her heart.

"Then, my child, it remains for you to turn all your thoughts and desires and aspirations from this fleeting world to another which is brighter and better, and to whose happiness there is no end."

"I have tried, but, oh, life is still sweet to me. Is not that very wicked, holy father?"

And the piteous, bright eyes sought his.

"It is natural to the child of earth. But your heart must be changed. Is there aught upon your soul which it is your duty to confess in order that you may obtain absolution in this solemn hour?"

"There is—there is!"

"We all sin. But if you repent you are pardoned."

"I have a great weight on my soul. I shudder to think that I might have died suddenly, without chance for confession. Come very close to me, for my voice fails me, and I am ashamed too, even before you, to confess the temptation to which I yielded. But it must be done, or I shall be doomed to eternal torment."

And she fixed upon the priest an awful, frightened look.

"Be calm, daughter. Forgiveness has been promised to all who sincerely repent and truly confess." And he leaned his ear to catch the faint and wavering accents of this dying confession with a double eagerness compounded not only of his desire to aid and comfort a parting soul but of curiosity to learn what sin had soiled the conscience of the proud and influential Countess Cecelia Rinaldini.

(To be continued.)

MASSSES FOR THE LATE EMPEROR.—Cardinal Bonaparte, cousin to the late Emperor, has sent 100

crowns to the parish church of Santa Maria, at Rome, to pay for masses for his relative. The Pope is said to have the intention to offer up a funeral mass himself in the Sistine Chapel.

LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE Sylvia Monk was so successfully carrying on her diabolical plot against the youthful marchioness the Marquis of Chetwynd and his guests had passed through that charmed half-hour after dinner so loved by English gentlemen, when, "across the walnuts and the wine," anecdotes and reminiscences are exchanged, and many a brilliant thought finds utterance, and many a scrap of philosophy or flash of wit is cooked. Lord Chetwynd was secretly anxious about his young wife, and he was not sorry at last to give the signal for the return to the drawing-room.

His lordship glanced about the room in quest of his young wife.

Bernice was in a farther corner of the long apartment, and was also standing. She began conversing with a tall blonde young gentleman, and exhibited a feverish quickness. She was plain at best, but to-night her brown gipsy face was startlingly pale, her lips colourless, and her entire appearance contrasted painfully with that of Miss Monk. But Bernice's brown eyes shone like stars, with a steaming, fitful lustre and brilliancy that almost atoned for her lack of beauty.

She uttered a low, sweet laugh at some witticism of her companion, but there was something unforced, strange and unnatural in her merriment that Lord Chetwynd approached her with a vague anxiety and apprehension.

For the next half-hour the marquis hovered about his young wife, scarcely losing sight of her. She was conscious of his close scrutiny, and became recklessly gay. Until now she had been shy and silent ordinarily, but to-night she flashed out like a brilliant comet. Her brain was stimulated by the drug Miss Monk had given her, and she uttered witty sayings and humorous speeches as freely as if she had been talking to her kind old foster-parents in the drawing-room of the old manse at St. Kilda. With her sun-like eyes flashing and glowing from out the startling pallor of her thin brown gipsy face, she looked so strange, so wild, so sweet, that the guests began to throng about her in a gathering admiration and fascination.

Lord Chetwynd was more anxious than pleased at the striking change in Bernice. Her low, mirthless laugh tortured him; he knew that, despite her reckless gaiety, all was not right with her. He was about to address her when, with a gay remark, she turned from her group of admirers and went to the fire, sinking into a chair at the corner of the hearth and shivering violently.

"How cold it is!" she murmured, half crouching before the bright blaze. "Ah, that was like a breath from the North Pole, keen and frosty! I seem to wither before it like some summer flower before the breath of winter."

"Bernice," exclaimed the marquis, in alarm, "are you ill? You look and speak so strangely."

Bernice raised her eyes to his, and there was a piteous look in her blazing orbs. Her pallor had become unearthly.

"Oh, Roy!" she cried, "I am so cold. There is a chill upon me like that of death!"

Her voice rang through the rooms like a tolling bell.

In a panic of terror the young marquis gathered up her slight, shrunken figure in his arms, and bore her out of the room, up the stairs, and to her own chamber.

With a furious pull at the bell he summoned Ffina, and bade her undress her mistress. He despatched a servant well mounted to Eastbourne for the Chetwynd family physician, and another to Chetwynd-by-the-Sea for the humbler practitioner there.

He summoned Mrs. Skewer to his young wife's side, and the pulse of his great dread spread throughout the household.

The guests took their leave at once, and Miss Monk, calm and composed, with her red cheeks flaming, came up to Lady Chetwynd's rooms.

She found the young marchioness in bed, wrapped in hot blankets, still pale as death, her terrible chill unabated.

The marquis was chafing her cold hands, and Mrs. Skewer was administering hot draughts, while Ffina was wandering about, putting away jewels in their cases, and wringing her hands and weeping at odd moments.

"There's a good deal of fever over at the village," said Mrs. Skewer, in a low tone, "and they do say it begins with a chill. I have sent soap to five families at Chetwynd-by-the-Sea for a week past, the fever being mostly among the poorer classes. I hope

my lady has not caught it! She rode over to the village this morning."

"Let me do something for her," said Miss Monk. "Poor Bernice! Poor little Bernice! Don't you feel better now?"

Bernice's heavy breathing was hushed for an instant, and the heavy eyelids were lifted, and the brown eyes, dull now as lifeless coals, glanced at the questioner, but no answer came from the chattering lips.

The young wife could not command her voice to speak.

Miss Monk performed various little ministering acts, and uttered her lamentations and seemed overcome with apprehensions. One would have thought Bernice especially dear to her.

The humble practitioner of Chetwynd-by-the-Sea soon arrived, and was shown up into Lady Chetwynd's presence.

Dr. Bennet approached the bedside upon his toes. Mrs. Skewer gave place to him.

He bent over the young marchioness, felt her pulse and looked grave.

The housekeeper explained the remedies that had been applied, and he approved of them.

"I should advise sending to Eastbourne for Dr. Hartwright, my lord," he said, drawing the marquis aside. "There are cases of fever in the village, and a chill always precedes the fever. I met Lady Chetwynd coming out of Martin's cottage yesterday, and Martin's wife is very low with fever. I warned her ladyship of the risk she was running in making such visits, but she said she was not afraid of illness; was perfectly healthy, and that her position as your lordship's wife imposed upon her certain duties in regard to your lordship's tenantry. She had taken beef tea and jellies to Mrs. Martin. Her notion did her ladyship credit, my lord, but was most rash. I apprehend no danger from this attack, my lord, but I would prefer to have Dr. Hartwright here."

"I have sent for him," said the marquis, briefly. "Lady Chetwynd was rising to-day, and I am persuaded she took cold from over-exertion. Do what you can for her till Hartwright comes."

The little doctor brought into requisition the remedies usually resorted to in similar cases, and with success.

The chill abated, but long before Dr. Hartwright arrived Bernice was in a raging fever, her face flushed, her pulse bounding, her eyes unnaturally bright and wild.

Dr. Hartwright appeared at last, and pronounced the case one of fever.

He was a large, portly man of benevolent aspect, a skilful physician, a scholar, and a gentleman.

The marquis looked at him appealingly for his verdict.

"You need not look so despairing, my lord," said Dr. Hartwright, as the two walked away from the bedside. "Lady Chetwynd is young, endowed with a splendid constitution, and I venture to predict that she will soon be well again."

Despite this prediction, despite the constant attendance of her physicians, the devoted care of her nurses, Lady Chetwynd grew steadily worse.

The fever seemed to have seized upon her with a hold that would not be shaken off.

Miss Monk shared Lord Chetwynd's vigils during the night, and Dr. Hartwright and Mrs. Skewer also remained in the room.

By morning the young marchioness was raving in delirium. She did not know her husband, shrieked in terror when Miss Monk bent over her, and raved wildly of St. Kilda, its rocks, its waves, its grandeur and its freedom.

By mid-day Lord Chetwynd, nearly beside himself, sent his butler to Eastbourne with a telegraphic message to a famous London physician.

The great London doctor arrived at Chetwynd Park that evening, held a consultation with Dr. Hartwright, suggested a changed course of treatment, and went back to town upon the following morning, without having been able to better the condition of the marchioness or even to probe the cause of her illness.

The fact that there was fever in the village of Chetwynd-by-the-Sea seemed to be proof sufficient to the trio of doctors that this fever of Lady Chetwynd's was of the same character.

The days dragged slowly by, those drear December days, when the sky was dark and the air heavy with gloom. In her bedroom Bernice Chetwynd lay battling with the poison fever that was consuming the life within her veins.

She knew no one. Her sweet voice rang through the rooms and halls, calling the names of those whom she had known at St. Kilda.

Her glorious hair, which the marquis begged might not be shorn, streamed over her pillow. Her hand was kept bandaged in ice-cold cloths, her eyes roved wildly from object to object, unknowing and unseeing.

Lord Chetwynd scarcely quitted her side night or day. It was his hand which gave her medicines, his

voice which soothed her wild fancies, his nursing, more tender than a mother's, which knew no rest. Miss Monk was very devoted in her attentions to Bernice. She fanned her for hours, she hovered about her like a ministering spirit, she prophesied continually that Bernice would soon be better, and kept alive the young husband's hope and courage.

The week thus passed—the week required for the subtle Indian poison to do its work—and Sylvia Monk knew that the end was near.

The day was dark and chilling, one of those cheerless December days which are found nowhere so cheerless as in England. A low fire burned in the grate. The curtains were drawn back, and the windows were lowered at the top. Bernice Chetwynd lay upon her bed in a deep sleep—a sleep so profound that it seemed like death.

Lord Chetwynd stood by the bedside, his fair face haggard, his blue eyes weary with watching. He was still hoping, and just now he was watching the faces of the great London physician and Dr. Hartwright, who were bending over the patient. The first-mentioned doctor laid Bernice's slender wrist in his hand.

"How sweetly she sleeps!" whispered the marquis, tuning his hungry, eager gaze from the doctor's to his young wife and back again. "This deep sleep will restore her strength. Is not the fever leaving her?"

"Yes," said the London doctor, "the fever is leaving her."

A great glow of joy lighted up the face of the marquis.

"Will she awaken in her right mind?" he asked. The London doctor answered in the affirmative, still keeping his finger upon the lessening pulse, and his eyes upon the thin, pinched face of Bernice.

"Thank Heaven!" cried Lord Chetwynd, fervently, the glow on his face deepening. "Thank Heaven that my darling is to be spared to me."

The face of the great London doctor grew pitying. He said, not looking at the marquis:

"I have not said that she will live, my lord. I cannot give Lady Chetwynd the boon of life. That must come from a hand that is mightier than mine."

"Ah, no, I did not say that. My lord, her life is obbing even now. She will awaken presently, know you, speak to you perhaps. But it will be a flaming up of the dying torch. My lord, it is well to know the truth. Lady Chetwynd is dying now at this moment."

Lord Chetwynd uttered a cry of horror that rang through the room.

Miss Monk shuddered, and emitted a low moan.

The statue-like figure upon the bed stirred feebly. The heavy brown lids lifted slowly from the hollow eyes. The poor, pinched young face awakened to a semblance of life again.

The cry of Chetwynd had aroused Bernice from her slumbers, and her eyes sought him with feeble glances.

"Roy!" she whispered, faintly. "Roy!"

Lord Chetwynd choked down his sobs and bent over her, his face white as her own, an awful anguish in his blue eyes.

"Oh, Bernice!" he said, in a choked voice, "Bernice—little wife!—Oh, Heaven! how can I bear it?"

He fell on his knees beside the bed, and buried his face in the coverlet, his frame shaking with suppressed sobs.

A blank look, as of utter failure to comprehend his emotion, passed over the girl's face. She looked from Chetwynd's bowed head to the faces of the doctors.

They were regarding her with pitying eyes.

She turned her glances upon Mrs. Skewer and Ffina, but both were crying with stifled sobs. With a puzzled expression she raised her thin hand between her and the light.

The hand fell again helplessly upon the bed.

"I—I understand—I have been ill," said Bernice, in a fluttering voice. "I had a chill, I remember. How weak I am! Yet I have no pain—only a sense of delicious languor! Roy, why are you crying? I am almost well again!"

The great London doctor laid his hand upon her forehead, upon which a moisture was gathering.

"My dear Lady Chetwynd," he said, solemnly, "you are almost well again."

Something in his tones gave her the alarm. She started, looked again at him, and a low, panting cry broke from her pallid lips.

"You—you speak as if I were dying," she gasped. "I am not dying. Oh, doctor, I am young, and I love Roy so, and he loves me—I know he loves me. I cannot die. You do not mean it—you cannot. Why, I am only seventeen and full of life and strength. Oh, no, you do not mean that I am dying!"

She looked at the physicians entreatingly, her soul in her wild eyes.

Dr. Hartwright's lips quivered and he turned away. The London doctor's prying look deepened, but his duty was plain and he could not shrink it.

"My dear child," he said, with a tender solemnity that brought conviction to the girl's rebellious heart, "you are dying even now. It would be cruel to keep the truth from you. If you have any last words to say, say them now."

There was an awful hush in the room. Lord Chetwynd stilled his sobs.

Bernice drew the coverlet above her face and was silent. What passed in her young soul in that awful moment they could only guess. Life was so sweet to her; and she was so young, how could she die?

They fancied they heard her lips move in prayer. They watched her in an agony of suspense and dread.

Presently she uncovered her face. It was calm now, and upon it was set the seal of an ineffable peace. The hollow eye shone with a lustre that might be a reflection of the glory of heaven.

"It is well," she whispered. "I am not afraid to die. I have not left my preparations for death until this hour. Oh, Roy, don't cry! It is better so. I am willing to die. But it is so strange that I should die. Why, a week ago I was healthy itself. Only yesterday I rowed on the sea—was it yesterday? It seems a hundred years ago. Oh, doctor, are you sure that I am dying?—perfectly sure?"

The London doctor bowed assent.

"Where is Sylvia?" asked Bernice, her eyes roving.

The motionless figure at the foot of the bed stirred now, and Miss Monk came slowly forward, her frame shrinking in a horror and loathing of death, her face hidden by her handkerchief.

"I want to see Roy and Sylvia alone," whispered Bernice. "Please go out all of you, and leave me with them."

The doctors, Fizee, and Mrs. Skewer, all went out, as she had bidden. Bernice was alone with the husband who worshipped her and the subtle and terrible enemy who had brought her to this pass.

CHAPTER XII.

For a few moments a deathly silence again reigned in the room. Bernice's thin, weak hand fluttered to the bowed head of her young husband, and rested there like a benediction. Her eyes wandered to Miss Monk, who had sunk into a chair by the bedside, and whose face was still covered. At last the feeble voice spoke:

"Roy, I am not afraid to die," she said, softly, her face suffused with a yearning tenderness which even death could not change. "It is better so. Be brave and calm, darling, for my sake. Look up. Let me meet the gaze of your dear eyes once more. Let me take the memory of your loving glance into eternity with me."

Lord Chetwynd forced himself to be calm, and obeyed her wish. He continued to kneel beside her bed, outwardly calm, but inwardly convulsed with an awful agitation.

"Roy," said Bernice, feebly, "I feel myself growing weaker. What I have to say must be said quickly. I have been very happy. I love you, darling. You have called me your guardian angel, and I shall be your guardian angel in truth now. I was not fit to be a marchioness. I am not stately nor beautiful, only a wild little island girl. Your wife should have been well born. Hush, Roy, your pain me. Your friends have never been reconciled to our marriage. The county families have blamed you for your *méchanceté*. But death condones everything. They will all be sorry for me now—I am so young to die!" and the girl's voice grew piteous in its sorrow.

"Oh, my wife! my wife!"

"My poor boy!" said Bernice, gently. "You will be lonely when I am gone. I have been here but a little while, but you will miss me from these grand rooms, miss my voice in the halls, my step on the stair, my presence everywhere. I know it all, Roy. But you are young, only three-and-twenty. In time I shall become to you only a tender memory. You will think of me at twilight, on the water or when you hear sweet music, but you will think that I am happy, and you will not wish me back. You will know that your darling is safe!"

She paused, breathless but strangely calm. Miss Monk shivered.

"Roy," said his young wife, more gently, more softly, her sweet, faint voice fluttering like a dying bird, "in heaven there is no jealousy. And so—and so—bear with me, Roy; I know the words will pain you now, but some time they will come back to you as a blessing—in the days when I shall have become a tender memory, you will take another wife to your bosom—"

"Never, never," cried Chetwynd, in passionate despair.

"You think so now, darling, but you are the last of a great line, and you have no one to succeed you. You are young, and you will need some one to cheer you. You will live to be old, Roy, and you must not live all your years alone. And so I want to say,

dear, that I—I should like you to marry again. I know of your betrothal to Sylvia. I love her, Roy, and I would like her to take my place. She loves you, and will make you happy. When I shall have been dead a year—how strangely it sounds—I want you to marry Sylvia. She will talk with you of me, and will comfort you in your sorrow, and will take my place, Roy, by-and-by. I shall not be jealous. Promise me, Roy."

"I cannot."

Bernice took his hand in one of hers. She reached out and took Sylvia's hand also. The guilty woman would have drawn back, but these cold, slender fingers closed upon hers and drew her hand to that of Chetwynd's, and placed it in his and clasped them both.

"I give you both my blessing," fluttered the failing voice. "Sylvia, be good and true to him. Roy, my husband, my love, my— Tell father and mother—St. Kilda—"

The sweet voices stopped. The hand that clasped those of Chetwynd and Sylvia Monk grew suddenly cold and rigid.

The marquise started up. An indescribable change had come over the little brown face, the eyes were fixed and glassy, the mouth still parted with a smile frozen on it.

Chetwynd uttered a wild cry and sprang to the door, summoning the doctors.

They were just outside, and hastened in. The great London doctor felt the girl's pulse and gently closed the staring eyes.

"She is dead!" he said, solemnly.

Miss Monk uttered a shrill shriek and went into hysterics. Mrs. Skewer and Fizee bore her to her own rooms, leaving her to the pangs of her guilty conscience, the ministrations of old Ragee, and the benefit of her soothing draught.

The next day Gilbert Monk, who had been summoned from London by telegraph by his sister, arrived at the Park.

He seemed shocked at the sudden death of the young marchioness. The house was overhung with a pall of gloom.

The servants moved about noiselessly in list slippers. Doors were opened and shut softly; voices spoke in whispers.

He asked for Lord Chetwynd, but was told that the marquise saw no one, not even the rector of his church. He wandered in and out of the lower rooms, and at last went up to his sister's apartments and knocked upon the door of the boudoir.

Old Ragee gave him admittance. He pushed past her into the room.

"Ah, Gilbert," said Sylvia, in her smooth voice. "I expected you earlier. Bernice died very suddenly. I suppose you were fearfully shocked."

"Well, no," said Monk, coolly taking a seat near his sister. "I expected it, you know."

Miss Monk's face paled.

"How could you expect her death?" she demanded, impatiently; "she was not ill when you went away."

"No. Well, I know you, you see, and I knew that she stood in your way. It was easy then for me to foretell the end."

Miss Monk made an imperative gesture with her hand, exclaiming:

"Never speak to me in that way again, Gilbert. Bernice died of fever. The doctors will tell you so. Don't dare to hint to me anything to the contrary of their verdict."

"When is Lady Chetwynd to be buried?"

"She is to lie in state a week. So Sanders has arranged. Roy hasn't given any directions yet, and no one dares speak to him. He is locked up in his room."

The announcement that Bernice was to remain unburied for a week was what Gilbert Monk had expected.

The drug whose subtle power held Bernice in her death-like trance would lose its effect in three days, and he must contrive to give her another dose before the first should exhaust itself.

About noon of the third day he went to the closed door of the drawing-room and knocked for admittance. He knew that Bernice was lying in state here, and it was time that he was at work.

Mrs. Skewer came to the door, opening it only a few inches.

"It is only I," said Monk. "I have not seen Lady Chetwynd since her death. May I see her now?"

"Certainly, sir," said the housekeeper. "Come in, sir."

Monk advanced to the bier, and Mrs. Skewer slid off the linen that covered the face. Monk drew back with a shudder. Surely Bernice was dead! One in a trance could not look like this.

A horrible misgiving came to him. A great horror came upon him. It was many minutes before he could speak.

Mrs. Skewer suspected his emotion, misinterpreting it, and busied herself with the flowers at the marble throat.

"We keep these flowers continually fresh," she

said. "These are wilting. I will get the fresh ones from the conservatory while you are here, sir."

She stole out silently, leaving Monk alone with the dead—or seeming dead—which was it?

He glanced around him hurriedly. There was a glass of water near which had been brought in by Mrs. Skewer for her own refreshment. He seized it. He had ready the larger of the two globules he had secured, and he dropped it into the glass. It dissolved on the instant.

He drew from his pocket a tea-spoon, and bent over the girl. There was no time for hesitation. He filled the spoon, carried it to the parted lips, and slowly emptied it.

The poisoned draught found its way down the girl's throat.

He wiped her stony lips with his handkerchief. He put his spoon in his pocket, and emptied the glass upon the thick carpet in a distant corner. He replaced the tumbler on the table and returned to the bier.

At this juncture Mrs. Skewer returned with her flowers, and he departed, drawing a long breath of relief when he found himself in the hall.

The week passed. The day appointed for the funeral—the sixth day after the supposed death—arrived. The great mansion was thronged with guests. Lord Chetwynd's relatives had all arrived. The county families were all represented. The young marquise, dressed in the deepest mourning, showed himself outside his room for the first time since his bereavement.

The form of Bernice was coffined, and her friends gathered to look for the last time on her sweet young face.

The coffin lid was screwed down, and that face was hidden from their sight.

The black crape-covered coffin was carried out to the waiting hearse, and the funeral cortège took its way to the parish church of Chetwynd-by-the-Sea.

(To be continued.)

The total export of iron and steel in 1872 averaged 232,335 tons per month.

In order that every possible respect should be paid to the family of Napoleon III., the Registrar-General deputed Dr. Farr to go to Chislehurst and record the death of the late Emperor.

AUSTRALIAN GOLD.—It is reported that 6,000 or 7,000 lbs. of Australian gold, recently coined at the French Mint, have been found so brittle that the pieces coined from this gold may readily be broken, and it is therefore found necessary to re-melt them, and toughen the metal. The brittleness is referred to the presence of a small proportion of antimony and arsenic.

THE TOMBS OF LOUIS XVI. AND MARIE ANTOINETTE.—The expiatory chapel over the presumed tombs of these two monarchs was built in 1816, at an estimated cost of 80,000*l.*, on the site of the Madeleine Cemetery, a few hundred yards from the Place de la Concorde, where the first victims of the Revolution were beheaded. An anniversary mass has been since celebrated on the 21st of January at this chapel, which has the architectural shape of a Roman tomb. On that day in 1793, after decollation, the members of the Paris Commune left the body of the king with the curate of the Madeleine, M. François Renard. The king wore a waistcoat of Marseilles quilt, gray silk breeches and stockings. After the usual prayers the body was thrown into a pit filled with quicklime, which was stirred up to hasten decomposition. A few months later the queen experienced the same fate. The altar is built over her presumed resting-place, and what few bones could be collected from the common osuary have been put in a vault.

THE BRIGHTON AQUARIUM.—Amongst the many interesting features lately brought under the notice of visitors to the Brighton Aquarium one of recent occurrence deserves special notice, both as interesting in itself and as proving that the measures adopted for preserving the health of the fish are not unattended with success. The spotted dog-fish or nurse-hound, one of the first species received at the aquarium, is showing signs of multiplying. A day or two ago Mr. Lawler, who is at present in charge of the aquarium, noticed on the shingle at the bottom of one of the tanks an egg of the dog-fish. He at once took steps to secure it by placing it on a branch of the pargenia, brought into the tank for the purpose. On the next day he observed two more eggs, not, however, deposited on the shingle, but artistically fastened to other branches of the pargenia. This had evidently been done by the fish itself. As a matter of natural history it will be curious to be enabled to arrive at the time required for the hatching of these eggs. There is, in a separate tank, another species of dog-fish, named the pickled or spur dog-fish, which is viviparous, and hopes are entertained that this mode of parturition may shortly be illustrated.



[SECRETS.]

JUDIE'S LOVERS.

A SWORD of velvet moss flung like an emerald tapestry upon the mountain slope, a spot girt with beauty, and studded with lofty trees for sentinels, this was where we had our picnic, Bert Cadogan and Judie and I.

It was not much of a picnic in an edible way. Mr. Cadogan had put some biscuits in his haversack, which when we had completed our ascent we ate with appetite, and wished for more.

It was Mr. Cadogan who proposed the excursion, upon this last day of Judie's stay. It involved quite a rough bit of mountain climbing, but both Judie and he had had experience. Judie showed her little feet in boots which she had worn among the Pyramids and up the Yo Semite, and Mr. Cadogan's alpenstock was a reminder of perils and adventures in Switzerland.

"Do you think you are equal to the ascent, Miss Laura?" he had inquired; and I had replied that one never knew what one could achieve until one had tried.

It did not occur to me that perhaps my friend and my guest would as soon go without me. Strange that it did not. But no; it would have been stranger if it had.

We spent the cool September morning over our work, while Mr. Cadogan read to us, and told us blood-curdling stories of Alpine adventures, to steady our nerves for the task before us.

"You never have told me where you became acquainted with your friend, Laura," said Mr. Cadogan, sleepily, during Judie's temporary absence from where we were sitting.

"At boarding-school. We were room-mates, and belonged to the same class."

"Ah, yes. Somehow I cannot keep in mind that you were a whole year away from here once. I was away three years, and yet when I came back I

could have sworn that not an hour had passed since I left you sitting in that very chair—just as you sit now. It was June when I went away, June when I came back," said Bert Cadogan, scrutinizing me in a preoccupied way. "I believe you wore the self-same white dress, Laura, the self-same spray twisted in your brown hair. I doggedly keep a vague notion in my head that you slept, like the enchanted princess, through those years of my absence."

I felt delicious floods of crimson tingling my cheeks and temples as Bert Cadogan talked. It was not so much what he said as what he left unsaid. If I were the enchanted princess, he must be the "fated fairy prince."

He was all that to my imagination. His fancy, too, came near enough to truth to feed my dreams upon. Life had been little better than a long, dull sleep so long as he was away.

"You do not accord much credit to Madame Blande," I said. "She thought my year's absence from home improved me vastly."

"Laura," said Mr. Cadogan, seriously, "you are not susceptible of improvement in my eyes."

I might have thought, from his tone, that these words meant what they would mean from most men to a woman. But he had said the same to me too many times before. I only looked up shyly, too plainly showing my pleasure, and met the wistful expression of his great brown eyes fixed full upon me.

"Is it possible?" I said. "Because I wear old-fashioned dresses here at home, and twist my hair up like a mermaid, I am to infer that artistic dress would not improve me, as it does other people. When Judie is married I am going to have a bride's-maid dress imported from Paris, and you will see what a change it will make."

Bert Cadogan started visibly; his face looked petrified.

"Is—Miss Martindale going to be married?" he asked, speaking her name with an effort.

"I suppose so, somewhere," I returned, curtly. "Oh, I thought you referred to something definite."

At that moment Judie came back. Possibly she had heard a portion of our conversation, or else the emphasis of our voices attracted her notice. She looked at Mr. Cadogan sharply, but he did not return the look.

At that moment our early dinner was announced, and an hour later we set out upon our tramp.

It was a delicious mid-day. We walked gaily along the road for a mile. At last, out of floods of sunshine, out of the fresh air with its winery fragrance, we turned into the cool shadows of the wood that lay at the base of the mountain.

When the climbing grew difficult I needed a good deal of Mr. Cadogan's help. Judie sprang nimbly on alone.

I remember her looking back from time to time, her tartan plaid wound about her, her whole form instinct with a fierce grace and beauty. I wondered with a pang whether any man could admire me in contrast with Judie Martindale.

By dint of hard climbing at length we stood panting upon the summit.

"Does it pay for the doing, Miss Martindale?" said Mr. Cadogan as she threw herself down to rest.

"There is just room enough here to live and to die," she said, in a cynical voice.

"Alone?" said Bert Cadogan, with a meaning.

"I have always dreamed of such a spot as this," continued Judie. "I believe you may leave me here to-night. The papers will record a mysterious disappearance, and I shall be at peace."

"I should be so curious to see how you would play hermit that I should intrude upon your retreat."

"I never heard you talk so much nonsense before, Judie," I said, pettishly.

There was an under-current in Mr. Cadogan's talk with Judie that day which I had never heard before, and which pained me strangely. During the month that Judie had been with me I had not thought of being jealous. Now, just as she was to go away, I felt uneasily the existence of some secret sympathy between her and Bert Cadogan. And if there was had I any right to gainsay it? Certainly not—no right at all. But I was annoyed all the same, and chose to hold myself aloof from them.

It was sombre and cool as we prepared to descend.

"People of any capacity can go down hill if they choose," I said, declining Mr. Cadogan's offered hand, and running forward alone.

He offered no remonstrance, letting me have my own way. In my excitement I went on so rapidly that I outstripped my companions and was obliged to wait for a moment or two for them to come up. Very leisurely they came, as though they were enjoying their opportunity; then the sound of their voices came on my strained ear, rapid, earnest, hushed, and I saw their faces—hers flushed with agitation, her lovely eyes full of tears, and his tender, pitiful, beseeching—not the same face that Bert Cadogan had ever turned toward me.

My brain reeled with a sudden madness. His love after all was for her, not me. Dullard that I had been not to suspect them till to-day! I turned blindly, my heart knocking against my breast. The whole earth grew dark and desolate. I plunged recklessly along. Suddenly a careless footfall failed me; I slipped and fell. The blackness and giddiness were real. Then consciousness went out with a sharp, wrenching pain, and when it returned after an interval I heard strange, subdued voices, and felt a recurrence of the pain. I knew feebly that I was being carried upon a litter, hurt, toward home, and then I knew no more.

It was my back that I had injured in my fall. I should recover my health, deformed. That was the verdict that came to me when the white frost of winter glittered in the sunshine of those weary days.

Judie had gone home now. She had stayed till I was out of danger, and had nursed me so tenderly, they said. I shuddered. The thought of her tenderness stung me afresh. She sent long letters every week, and budgets of papers and reviews, her father's speeches, letters in which she was mentioned, her toilets described, and then sheet after sheet containing accounts of her gossips, of the people she met, the sights she saw.

Never was there more cruel kindness. She meant well, but what was her rehearsal but a taunt—a reminder that I was shut out for ever from the scenes she graced?

I had one sweet comfort through all. Mr. Cadogan had not followed Judie, and every day brought me some token of his plying remembrance.

When I was able to receive visitors I saw him often. He brought the magazines and read to me. He tried over the new music which waited for my nerveless fingers; he surrounded me with a sense of our mutual sympathy and kindred tastes, as he had

done ever since I was old enough to love him with a woman's passion.

We had a long, late summer that year, and I went out of doors, for the first time since my accident, on a lovely, balmy afternoon. The doctor had forbidden my walking, and a chair had been made for me which I could propel at will. In that I was carried into the garden and left alone.

A well-known step came up the walk by-and-by, and Mr. Cadogan joined me before I could dry the tears which were in my eyes. He stood beside me, and laid his hand on mine—my white-looking little hand which rested on the arm of my chair.

"What is the matter, little Laura?"

"The days that are no more," Mr. Cadogan, "I quoted.

"Have you regrets?" he asked.

"That is a strange, cruel question. What have I but regrets? I have lost everything."

"What do you mean by that, Laura? You have not lost me."

"Perhaps not yet. Deformed people retain their friends through pity, I believe. But I hate pity."

"You have made a strange, cruel speech now. You are not deformed. I am not your friend. And I do not pity you, Laura. I pity your sufferings, but I love you."

I felt the red blood rush to my pale cheeks. "You love me?" I repeated, slowly, almost sceptically. "Mr. Cadogan, are you not Judie Martindale's lover?"

It was his turn to flush.

I was watching him with jealous eyes, and I saw the change that crossed his countenance, saw him control it before he answered, with a smile:

"No, Laura, I have not that honour."

"I am not fit for your love now," I cried, bitterly.

"Did you think it was your beauty alone that won my heart, darling?"

"I don't know what may have won your heart, Mr. Cadogan. I don't feel that I have any claim to it. Once you might have loved me when I was fresh and strong. But you did not. And now that I am maimed and twisted—a helpless, hopeless invalid—there is something that smacks of self-sacrifice in your love, and I will not have it."

"You will have it, Laura, always; you cannot help that. You will return it, too, for I will make you. Whether you will accept me as your lover, whether you will marry me, I must leave to time."

I was weak and babyish. I cried.

"If this had come before—oh, Bert, you little know how I have loved you—how I have tortured myself believing you loved another. But now—it is too late—too late."

"You are gloomy and fanciful. Your hurt is not incurable. If it were, it has not spoiled your beauty, as you insist. You are pale—the white-rose pallor I admire; and, as to the twist in your shoulder, it will come right in good time; the doctor assures me so."

He had consulted the doctor then. He was going to take me on the strength of his assurance.

"We will wait and see," I returned, briefly, and I turned the crank which moved my chair.

"You are going, Laura?"

"Yes."

"Then you do not care for me. Your excuse is mere subterfuge."

I looked once in his face. I dared to look and let him see my love. But then he must have seen it a hundred times before.

"Make me a promise," I said. "Do not talk of love to me again till I am well."

"Laura—and if—"

"If I am never well? Then you must never speak again of it."

I had put a harder task upon myself than upon Mr. Cadogan. I hoped he would disobey me, but he did not. The winter set in rigorously, with all the keenness of winter in a mountainous region, and my mental excitement hindered my improvement. But still I did improve.

About Christmas I walked across the room—walked up to a pier-glass at the extreme end, scrutinizing my altered form, my painful movements, with horror; and when I reached the glass I fainted away.

Bert Cadogan was in the room.

"Your mind is diseased more than your body," he said when I had revived and grown calm. "Why not accept Miss Martindale's invitation, and go to London for a few weeks?"

"I am a beautiful object for London society," I sneered; and then, with an after-thought that swept my brain with a terrific gust, "I have never told you that Judie had invited me for this winter. How did you know it? I meant to keep it from you lest you should want me to go."

Miss Martindale mentioned in one of her letters

that she should expect to see you, and that you might live as retired as you liked."

"In one of her letters? You and she correspond, then?"

"Occasionally."

"I did not know it."

He made no reply, and I changed the subject, but all night I tossed sleeplessly, fevered with speculation as to why Judie wrote letters to Bert Cadogan.

Oh, these vigils of sickness! They are a foretaste of the Inferno. One good thing came of mine, however. I made a resolution—a resolution to get well. As a preliminary step I resolved upon the visit to London. Mr. Cadogan would be sure to follow me thither and I would see him and Judie face to face.

Not meaning to shut myself up either while there, I sent for a dressmaker and for a month was in a whirl of excitement over the preparation of dresses calculated to disguise the twist in my figure, which even to my morbid scrutiny began to grow less noticeable as I was able to walk with greater ease.

The gay season was at its height when I reached London. Judie, who had been motherless from childhood, presided over her father's establishment.

She had remained away from a dinner-party on account of my arrival, but was under obligations to attend a reception at a later hour, an hour at which I was in the habit of going to bed.

She invited me to come and stay in her dressing-room, so that we might talk while her toilet progressed. What a superb creature she was! How I envied her as I watched her.

"How happy you look and are, Judie," I said, with a half-smile.

She turned round with a half-surprised air I thought.

"You are happy, too, darling?" she said, coming towards me to kiss me. "I know something, and I am so glad."

"You refer to Mr. Cadogan, I suppose. Did you suspect last summer?"

"No, I did not. In fact, I—"

She saw from my face that she had made a mistake; saw that I hoped she had suspected, and evidently knew not how to remedy her blunder.

"You what, Judie?" I asked.

She bent down and took my hand uneasily. The locket she wore hung just within my reach. Some evil impulse moved me. I caught it and pressed the spring; the lid flew open.

"I ought to know your secret as well as you mine," I cried, maliciously, as she snatched the locket from me.

There were two faces in the two halves. I only saw one—Bert Cadogan.

"Oh, you do not want to give me your confidence. I beg your pardon," and I almost pushed her from me.

"Laura, you must not misjudge me."

"I never judge without proof," was my retort.

"Do not, ever," she answered, earnestly.

I had lost my stimulant to get well. I shut myself in my room for a week. Then two motives prompted me to appear at an amateur concert which Judie gave. One was the mere rebound of excitement, which made my seclusion no longer bearable, the other the expectation that Bert Cadogan would reach London that night.

I think I looked perhaps as well as ever in my life that evening. I wore an exquisite Paris dress of white cashmere; my brown, abundant hair fell in heavy ringlets to my waist. I sat near Judie, at the head of the room, in a deep chair covered with maroon silk, watching with listless interest the new faces that came and went.

There was some very good amateur music, which pleased even my fastidious musical taste. And at length, about the middle of the evening, Bert Cadogan came down the room towards me, smiling with anxious eyes.

"How are you, Laura—better?"

I was perverse enough to think that to tell him I was better was to solicit a renewal of his wooing. I was proud and suspicious. So I said:

"Oh, I am well enough to look on, as you see, like an oyster grown to its rock."

"But you are enjoying your visit? You are glad that you came?"

"Doubtless you are."

"Why, Laura?"

"It gives you an excuse to come also. Have you seen Miss Martindale?"

"Yes, of course, for a moment."

"There she comes now."

Judie's eyes were fastened on Bert Cadogan's face. She joined us, and a few minutes later they left me and walked away together. My eyes followed them till they left the room.

What did it mean, I asked myself—this bond between them? Evidently Mr. Cadogan went and came at Judie's bidding. Had he loved her? Had she

rejected him? If so, why did she not let him alone? She was a coquette; she could not resist to use her power. And he—he could not resist her, even while declaring love for me. That was my decision.

What a torturing half-hour I spent sitting there in my maroon-covered chair alone. I tried to persuade myself that I wanted no man's love; that I would never marry. I tried to justify Bert. I had forbidden, refused him. I had no right to restrict him. But, spite of all, I was mad with jealous longing for him.

Mr. Martindale came to take me to supper, and Bert and Judie were left together still.

"Now, Miss Laura," said my host, "I have a favour to ask, and I hope I shall do it in my best manner, for I do not want to be refused."

"What favour can I possibly do you, sir?"

"You can give us one song after supper. Is it too much to ask? You may wait, if you like, till the 'vulgar crowd' has gone. I will keep only the choice spirits to hear you."

"You need not take any stupendous precautions. I will sing willingly, whenever it is desired."

"My dear young lady, I am delighted. I never gained a precious boon so easily before."

"Judie knows that I always sing without urging."

"We thought your ill health and aversion to crowds might render you averse to singing for company."

"Not at all. I can neither dance nor flirt. I ought to consider it a privilege to sing."

It is no wonder that I astonished Mr. Martindale. An hour before no inducement could have prompted me to sing. Now it seemed to offer a vent to my excited feelings.

I exerted myself to please Mr. Martindale, who was a polished, entertaining man, and who had conceived a great liking for me from our first meeting. We whiled away the time in discussing politics, until the time had come for my song, and then he led me to the piano.

As I glanced about the room my eye fell upon Judie and Bert Cadogan in earnest talk.

"They look quite lover-like," I remarked to Mr. Martindale, who did not perceive the sting of my tone.

"I would to Heaven they were," he answered, with a significance I could not interpret.

The tumult of my feelings was complete. It was a tumult that brimmed my voice with an intense dramatic pathos, an expression whose electric thrill went among my listeners from soul to soul.

I sang a very simple ballad, but it held the tragedy of my own heart in its words:

"Little Clo's is the old, old story,
Love's dream and a summer friend,
June rose dead, and the bright dream is fled;
And little Clo' means at the end,
He never loved me, you see,
He never will, no, never;
And what will become of me? she cries,
For I shall love him for ever.
And the years are so weary, weary,
For all through the nights and days
Her heart goes back in the bright dream's track,
And little Clo' means as she says,
He never loved me."

"And she says, It will be no better
On high in the mansions fair;
He'll love his love in the life above.
And little Clo' means in despair,
He never loved me, you see,
He never will, no, never,
And what will become of me? she cries,
For I shall love him for ever."

I slipped away unnoticed from the piano, and hid myself amid the curtains of a recess.

There was a hush like a sob among my listeners, which was the best applause they could give. No one else offered to sing, and the company broke up in little conversational groups.

Near me a gentleman and lady sat down, and began to discuss me.

"I don't know," said the latter, "about people giving such public vent to private griefs. I am always inclined to suspect the sincerity that displays itself on the surface."

"I am sure no one could have sung that song so who did not feel every word of it."

"She is not really deformed," continued the lady; "the defect in her figure is scarcely noticeable. She need not have been so sensitive."

"Did you hear that she had broken her engagement?"

"No; but I should judge so from her song. They say that the gentleman felt in some manner to blame for her hurt, and, believing that she was fond of him, offered himself."

"From a sense of duty?"

"Well, something of that sort."

"She is not one whose heart need go a-begging, I should say."

Then the couple rose and went away.

So this, then, was the story—the truth doubtless of the matter.

Bert Cadogan had offered himself out of pity as a compensation, so to speak, for his negligence which had resulted in my injury.

He loved Judie. She loved him. But he felt that I had a claim upon him, and the claim of his own heart was to be set aside. My blood boiled.

I said to myself, "Abominable!" Without seeing Mr. Cadogan again I left London the ensuing day.

I sent him the following note as a leave-taking: "I know your motives; they seem to me mistaken. Since you have never been bound it is perhaps superfluous for me to say that you are free. From
LAURA."

I looked jaded when I reached home, and they thought me worse.

Aunt Isabel said I must rest. "That is precisely what I cannot do," I replied. "I want to go away and travel, and not know what rest means."

They were delighted that I should wish to go, and after brief preparation Aunt Isabel and I started for the Continent, to be followed by my father in the coming autumn.

I had my way. I lived without rest. My capacity for excitement was perfectly insatiable.

And instead of injuring my health I improved upon the regimen.

My first news from home came with papa, who joined us in Spain, in the autumn.

Bert Cadogan had not been home during the summer. Papa just before he left had met him with Mr. and Miss Martindale, which was the sum of his information, and upon which I built such conjectures as my mood dictated.

I had taken a peculiar aversion to everything like admiration or attention from the other sex, but we became interested in spite of ourselves in an English gentleman with whom our acquaintance began during our sojourn in Madrid.

Mr. Keith—that was his name—was, as I have said, an Englishman, but he had spent so many years abroad that he had almost lost his nationality. He was one of those rare men who can display interest without affecting sentiment, with whom you dare be intimate with entire immunity from the suspicion of flirting.

He was very useful to us on account of his familiarity with the language, and a common liking led him to attach himself to and remain with our party for the time being.

It was, I think, in Rome that for the first time a species of home-sickness came over me one evening after a long and fatiguing day of sight-seeing. We were sitting in the parlour of the lodgings we had secured that morning.

Papa and Mr. Keith played at cribbage; Aunt Isabel sat tatting—she was never too tired for tatting; and I, after sitting with my head upon my hand for a good half-hour, got up and brought my camphor-bottle and photograph-album by way of dispelling my home-sickness.

The album still lay open before me, when by-and-by Mr. Keith sauntered toward me, and his glance fell upon the page.

He started. "Miss Laura, where did you get that?" he exclaimed.

"Do you know Judie Martindale?" I inquired, with equal surprise.

"I know this lady, Miss Laura. She is my wife."

The mere excess of my astonishment kept me from screaming outright. Mr. Keith had spoken in a very low tone, and had not been overheard, for papa was buried in his newspaper, and Aunt Isabel had discovered a snail in her thread.

"You must be joking, Mr. Keith."

"I never spoke more sober truth. I have no right, I suppose, to speak it, but I am tired of concealment."

"Why do you conceal what you have told me?" "From necessity for the time. I met Judie Martindale in Switzerland three years and more ago. After a six months' acquaintance I offered myself and was accepted. Her father, however, interposed. He desired a more brilliant match for her. He called me lazy and shiftless, because I had preferred to live upon my moderate income, as suited my tastes, instead of investing my money and going to work upon something more practical than the art I love. Judie refused to break with me, and her father to sanction our union. We wed clandestinely; we corresponded. At last she was going home. Our last interview transpired.

"No human agency shall force me to marry another," she said.

"Judie," I answered, "if that is so, bind yourself to me. Make it impossible for anything to come between us."

"She yielded to my urging. I left her to find an acquaintance who would assist us. The arrangements were made. We were married. And since we parted at the chapel door we have never met."

"How long is it?"

"Two years."

"And have you had no communication with each other since?"

"Only occasionally, through the friend who is in our confidence."

"Who is this friend?"

"Since I have gone so far, Miss Laura, there is no object in keeping anything back. His name is Bert Cadogan."

"Oh, Mr. Keith—"

My joy, my relief, almost overpowered me, but I could not force my new-found happiness upon his misery.

"What, Miss Laura?"

"I am so glad you have told me."

"Are you going to give me some good advice?"

"Yes, I believe I am."

"What is it?"

"Since you are married to Judie Martindale, claim her."

"She would not forgive the exposure."

"I think you are mistaken. I believe she is waiting for you to do so."

"And her father?"

"Would prefer anything to the humiliation of a secret marriage."

"Possibly he might invalidate the marriage, should he determine to."

"Then marry her again. But, Mr. Keith, if you are as good as I believe you I think Mr. Martindale is too just to persist in separating you from his daughter merely because he has a prejudice toward artists, and particularly toward Englishmen who live abroad."

"I will live anywhere he pleases if he will only give me Judie. I will turn man of business, keep books by double entry if he so desires; I'll buy a farm or gratify whichever hobby he happens to be riding if I may only have my wife."

"I think in that frame of mind you will get her."

"Miss Laura, you don't know how much good you have done me."

"Mr. Keith, you don't know how much good you have done me."

"How so?"

"Well, I have had my own troubles because I believed my friend Judie had a lover. But I did not think of it being you."

"Who, then, Miss Laura?" asked he, a little fiercely.

"Only Mr. Cadogan."

He smiled at that.

"And it troubled you to suspect that Bert was fond of my wife?"

"Somewhat so."

"I understand now why the poor fellow has written such legible letters for six months past."

"Has he written to you during the past six months?"

Oh, Mr. Keith, let me see his letters."

I had had enough of travel. I wanted to go home.

When we sailed Mr. Keith accompanied us.

I think Mr. Cadogan must have had a inkling of affairs through his friend, for he met me with just that calm air of mastery and comprehension which suited my mood.

"I shall not ask about your health," he said. "I see that the time has expired when my promise binds me not to speak as I would."

"You have had great patience, Bert."

"And long-suffering."

"Part of that has been mine."

"You made it for yourself."

"Well, I don't know. Mystery always annoys me."

"It was not my own secret, or I should not have kept it from you."

"Please don't have any of your own, or other people's henceforth."

"I should not, of course, when we two are one."

Meanwhile Judie's lover, her real lover, hastened to plead his suit. Mr. Martindale was considerably shocked, and rather indignant, at his daughter's duplicity as he called it. He said Mr. Keith did not suit him for a son-in-law; still had he known that Judie was so determined he would have preferred an avowed marriage to a clandestine one.

They were married over again, and with considerable pomp. Mr. Keith has a consenship which still enables them to live abroad. Judie became so used to her independence and admiration as a married woman that she has been unable to give up her old habits, and shines as much as ever, a belle.

For my own part, in my quiet home I have my husband, health and happiness. And, whatever trouble may come nigh me, it is not in the form of Judie's lovers.

W. H. R.

FACETIÆ.

EPIGRAMMATIC.

Elder Brother: "You don't know grammar, Charley!"

Charley: "Yes, me do know grammar—me want to see her on Christmas Day."—*Punch.*

DEAR OLD DONKEY!—Some people are so obstinate! There's this old party who dines at the table d'hôte at the "Belgravia"—he will insist on opening his own seltzer water, and gives us a shower-bath all round.—*Punch.*

A NEW SOCIETY.—An American paper says a society has been formed in New York—not before it is wanted—called the Ladies' Anti-ambitious-to-figure-in-the-newspapers-with-no-useful-result-and-to-the-neglect-of-your-own-domestic-duty Society.

THE DESIRED IMPRESSION.—A gentleman expressed to a lady his admiration of her toilet. She said she supposed he had been impressed by her angel sleeves. He answered with effusion, "No; but I'd like to be."

LITTLE JENNIE.—A little four year old, of Bristol, the other day, was accosted by a Quaker lady, who asked, "How old art thou, little girl?" She looked up in the face of the Quakeress, and replied, "I'm not art thou; I'm little Jennie."

FARE EXPENDITURE.

Fair Fare: "Your fare is eighteen-pence, I think—it's exactly three miles!"

Cabby: "Your husband's a lucky man—blowed if you don't know how to lay out yer money!"—*Fun.*

"BURNING LATHER."—"So there's another rupture at Mount Vociferous," said Mrs. Partington, as she put down the paper and put up her specs; the paper tells us about the burning lather running down the mountain, but it don't tell how it got there."

AN ABSURD REQUIREMENT.—A shoemaker with one eye complained that one of his lamps did not burn. One of his shopmates, who is a genuine son of the Emerald Isle, with astonishment exclaimed: "Faith, and what do you want with two lamps? Ye haven't but one eye."

DETECTED.

First Violin (after the Quartette in C Major—unsatisfactory somehow). "Hullo!—Hark!—There—I knew there was something wrong! This confounded tea-kettle's been singing B Flat all the time!"—*Punch.*

PRUSSIAN ASCENDANCY.—We understand that the spread of Prussian military principles in the army is so decided that the guard which nightly goes to defend the Bank of England always marches to the tune of "The Watch on the Rhine-o."—*Fun.*

GOOD FUN.—A young lady gives a recipe for having fun. She says:—"Invite half a dozen boys and girls to your house when your ma and pa are away; put a shilling in a dish with molasses an inch deep in it, and offer it to the boy who gets it with his mouth. The more the boys who try to get it the more fun will there be."

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE BETTER THAN BOOK-LEARNING.

Governess: "Well, and so they export wheat and cotton. Now, you've seen wheat in the ear, but not cotton!"

Pupil: "Oh, yes, I have! Grandpa, you know!"—*Punch.*

THE MAN AT THE WHEEL.

Unprotected Female (awaking an old gent who is not very well): "Oh, mister, would you find the captain? I'm sure we're in danger. I've been watching that man at the wheel; he keeps turning it first one way and then the other, and evidently doesn't know his own mind."

A POLITE HINT.—A father feeling that a young man was staying rather late in the parlour, and wishing to give him a polite hint thereof, went to the head of the stairs and called out, "Here, young man, isn't it about time that you were going? Do you know that it is eleven o'clock, and that you are burning out my gas?" The young man left and has not returned.

THE TWO AUGURS.

Dialius: "I always wonder, brother, how we chief augurs can meet on the opening-day without laughing!"

Gladstonius: "I have never felt any temptation to the hilarity you suggest, brother; and the remark favours of flippancy."—*Punch.*

THE WAY TO SECURE SAFETY.—A railway signalman, caught napping at his post, and convicted of wilful negligence, said to the jailer, who

was about to look him up—"I always thought that the safety of a railroad depended on the soundness of the sleepers." "So it does," retorted the jailer, "but such sleepers are never safe unless they are bolted in."

DEER & DONKEY.—The people of Jasper County, Mississippi, lately voted against the introduction of railways on the ground that the locomotives would frighten away the deer. Of course, a place where deer are plentiful is likely to be a little behind, not to buck at innovation and fawn on tradition. But our Jasper friends should be told that if the railway drives away the deer it will cause an immense influx of donkeys.—*Punch*.

ROMANTIC VERT.—A chapter of "Notes in Rome" opens with the following anecdote: "Did you visit Rome in your travels?" asked a gentleman in the interval of a wait at a ball-room partner who had just returned from the Continent. "Rome! Rome!" replied the young lady, in a hesitating voice. "Let me see—did we go to Rome? Oh, yes. That is where we saw a woman sharing a dog on the steps of a church!"

IGNORANT INTERFERENCE.—A story is told about a man who put the saddle hind-part foremost upon his horse while in a condition of dissipation, superinduced by fire water. Just as he was about to mount a friend came up and told him to hold on a minute, because the saddle was on wrong and wanted refixing. The horseman gazed for a moment at the intruder, as if in deep thought, and then said: "You let that saddle alone! How do you know which way I am going?" And the gentleman passed on.

SOMETHING IN IT.
A youthful novice in smoking turned deadly pale and threw his cigar away.
"Oh, dear," he said, "there's som'in' in that cigar that's makin' me ill."

"I know what it is," said his companion, puffing away.
"What?"
"Tobacco."

A PHILOLOGICAL POWER.

HER PROFESSOR.—"Is it not a shdrainch ting, ladies, dat de Latin race cannot agnure de English bronouney-ation? I haf choost dis momead bardet from an Italian chendleman (a grade went of mine ant a forry gleffer man) who has lifted in Lonten alimete as long as I haf—dewdy-vile agnure—ant foot you peliet it? He shbeags English vit a krite shdron voreghen indonation! How to you aground vor a se eggghen-ordinary seergoomshadans as tat?"—*Punch*.

EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.—A story is being told of a fashionable tailor. One of his aristocratic customers, thinking to annoy him, went up to him as he was walking on the Parade at Brighton, at the most fashionable hour of the day, and said to him, "See how badly this coat fits." The great Sutor was fully equal to the occasion. Taking up a piece of a chalky substance at the side of the road, he marked sundry hieroglyphics over the back, and then, turning him aridit, said, "There, my lord, you go and show yourself to my people, and they will soon put you right."

TAKING CARE OF THE PENCE.—The Austrians seem to be as close calculators as the Scotch, and to have a lofty disdain of round numbers. An official estimate has been prepared at Vienna of the cost of the Great Exhibition which is to be held there this summer, and a statement put forth that the entire expense, up to the time of closing the accounts at the end of the year, will be "13,238,300 florins 30 kreuzers." Let us cherish a hope that this estimate will not be exceeded; and, above all, that those odd kreuzers may not expand into an additional florin by the end of the year.—*Punch*.

AN UNSATISFACTORY EXPERIMENT.—Our friend Potts read somewhere that electric sparks could be evolved from a cat by taking it into a dark room and stroking its back. He made the experiment, and in a few moments was surprised to hear a loud yell and to feel something clawing across his face. Then he missed the cat. Mr. Potts is now uncertain whether he was struck by lightning evolved from the cat's back, or whether the cat became unduly excited as he stroked it, and stroked back again; but he is certain that when he undertakes to procure electricity again from a cat he will first soothe it with a breech-loader.

A NARROW ESCAPE.—A merry party of ladies and gentlemen had a narrow escape from a terrible death among the Thousand Islands at the St. Lawrence recently, but were saved by the presence of mind and heroism of one of the young ladies. They were out in a yacht at a late hour in the evening, when the clouded sky rendered it almost impossible to distinguish objects on the water at a short distance. They were sailing about thoughtlessly, and enjoying themselves as such parties are in the habit of doing, when suddenly a dark object loomed up

before them, which was evidently a large steamer. A collision seemed inevitable, unless the steamer could be signalled to change her course, as it was impossible for the sailing craft to do so. The party were in a terrible dilemma, as, except a few matches, there seemed to be no means at hand to procure a light. The young ladies, except one, screamed with terror, and a fearful catastrophe seemed on the point of consummation. A slight jostling, however, was observed in the direction of the silent young lady. No one could see what she was doing, but she soon handed a roll of paper to one of the gentlemen. In a moment it was ablaze, the steamer's course was changed, and the party were saved. When they recovered from their fright there was naturally much speculation as to where that important roll of paper came from; and it finally leaked out that the fair one had heroically sacrificed her bustle to secure the safety of her companions.

MORE THAN ONE.

"Yes, it was a mighty effort,
Born of Heaven's inspiration;
Would his earnest voice had thundered
Over the whole listening nation!
How firm-linked the facts he uttered!
Never clearer clearest fountain!
Truths on truths, like rocks piled upward,
Till they towered a star-crowned mountain!"

Such the thoughts of many thousands
As from that Great Hall they wended;
But did inspiration only
Make his thoughts so tense and splendid?
Ah, there was with him another
Force before he stood and thundered,
So that firm conviction settled
"Right!" while Error's old chains sun-
dered.

And that force was also sacred;
Ask you in what it consisted?
Labour, labour wed with Conscience—
Under that Flag he enlisted.
Days and days he worked, thus growing
In its golden shadow giant—
Harp and flute and organ sounding
From Heaven's Truth made him reliant.
So he grew and grows for battle,
Yet on his firm forehead never
Is a tempest night of Hatred,
But Love's own calm rainbow ever;
Hatred not for an oppressor—
Hate of Wrong itself makes glorious;
And with love for all the human
Stands Truth's soldier up victorious.

Oh, ye men of preparation,
Not alone when Right unfolding
To the world are ye sublimely
Her own deathless diadems holding;
There may be an inspiration
When the voice or pen is wielded,
But to work before their uses,
As to tireless carved rivers
Ere they burst on Earth with blessings,
Is a crown by Heaven yielded.
Oh, ye men of Work with Conscience,
Keep full mated in your stations;
So, while Truth's Inciters for us
And the coming generations,
Will the Universe's meanings
More and more fill all the nations.

W. R. W.

GEMS.

ONES.

One hour lost in the moraing by lying in bed will put back all the business of the day.
One hour gained by rising early is worth one month of labour in the year.
One hole left in the fence will cost ten times as much as it will to fix it at once.
One diseased sheep will spoil a flock.
One unready animal will teach all others in company bad tricks, and the Bible says, "One sinner destroys much good."
One drunkard will keep a family poor and make them miserable.

One wife that is always telling how fine her neighbour dresses, and how little she can get, will look pleasanter if she talk about something else.
One husband that is penurious and lazy, and deprives his family of necessary comforts, such as their neighbours enjoy, is not as desirable a husband as he ought to be.

MR. ALFRED TIDEX, who is now staying with his family at Wiesbaden, has been honoured by her

Imperial and Royal Highness the Crown Princess of Prussia with a commission to paint a water-colour portrait of the Princess Victoria.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GINGER SPONGE CAKE.—One cup of molasses; one cup of butter; two cups of sugar; four eggs; three cups of flour; one cup of milk, soda and ginger.

DOUGHNUTS.—Two eggs and one cup sugar, well beaten together; one and one-half cups sweet milk; two teaspoonsful cream tartar; one teaspoonful of soda; one nutmeg; flour to knead soft.

GINGER CAKE.—Take three pounds of flour, one pound of sugar, one pound of butter, two ounces of ginger, and one pint of treacle; add a quarter of a pint of cream and a little nutmeg. Mix warm, and bake in a slack oven.

FRUIT CAKE.—Two cups sugar; one cup and a half of butter; one half cup of cream; four eggs; one teaspoonful of soda; five cups of flour; one pound of raisins; one pound of currants; one quarter of a pound of citron. Put the flour in with the fruit.

STATISTICS.

THE PRECIOUS METALS.—The Custom House returns for the year 1872 show registered imports of gold into the United Kingdom amounting to 18,337,852*l.*, being less by 9,275,153*l.* than in the preceding year; and exports of gold amounting to 19,748,916*l.*, being more than the gold import of 1872, but less by 940,359*l.* than the gold export of the preceding year. The import of gold from Australia declined from 6,898,320*l.* in 1871 to 5,983,232*l.* in 1872; but the import from the United States advanced from 6,492,595*l.* in 1871 to 8,147,500*l.* in 1872. The export of gold to British possessions in South Africa in 1872 advanced to 1,280,675*l.* upwards of a million went to Egypt; the export to South America exceeded the import thence by above three and a half millions. There was again, as in 1871, an export of more than eight millions to Germany; the export of gold from the United Kingdom to Germany, France, Holland, and Belgium exceeded the import of gold thence by 6,793,458*l.* Gold to the amount of 1,670,000*l.* was also exported to Portugal. The import of silver into the United Kingdom in 1870 amounted to 11,167,467*l.*, being 5,359,855*l.* less than in 1871. The import from the United States, though exceeding four and a half millions, showed a decline of a million; the import from South America—viz., 2,700,000*l.*—was 600,000*l.* less than in 1871; and the import from China, which exceeded three millions in 1871, fell to a merely nominal sum in 1872. The export of silver in 1872 amounted to 10,586,945*l.*, or nearly two and a half millions less than in 1871. The export of bullion for India exceeded five and a half millions, being about double the amount in 1871; but the demand on the Continent of Europe showed a very great decrease. The total registered import of gold and silver into the United Kingdom in 1872 was therefore 29,505,519*l.*, being 8,635,084*l.* less than in 1871; and the total export was 29,835,801*l.*, being 3,329,280*l.* less than in 1871.

MISCELLANEOUS.

DR. HESSEL.—Taking into consideration the exceptional circumstances of the case, Government has resolved to defray the expenses incurred by Dr. Hessel in his defence, and also to provide passage money for himself and wife to Brazil.

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.—Efforts are again being made for the purpose of inducing the Government to take possession of the famous monument known as Cleopatra's Needle, which was presented to King George IV. by Mehmet Ali, and now lies buried in the sand on the banks of the Nile.

PRINCE BISMARCK has proposed to the Federal Council that Cologne, Konigsberg and Posen shall be converted into fortresses of the first class. For this purpose the following sums are to be expended: On Cologne and Konigsberg 9,000,000 thalers each, and on Posen 7,000,000. On Wilhelmshaven it is proposed to spend more than 10,000,000 in fortifications.

NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSE.—The doom of Northumberland House is sealed at last. The Duke has agreed to sell it for 500,000*l.*, and a great street, flush with Cockspur Street, will run through it down to the Embankment. According to the rate books of St. Martin, the mansion was built in 1005 by Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, from whom it passed to the Earls of Suffolk, and received the name of Suffolk House. It came to the Percy family by the marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of the second Earl of Suffolk, to Algernon Percy, tenth Earl of Northumberland, in 1642.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NORMAN.—We will attend to your request.

H. A.—1. London Bridge is the only correct designation. 2. We rather think that they are still living.

TOM BOWLING.—The great fight for the championship at Farnborough between Tom Sayers and Heenan took place April the 17th, 1860.

F. C.—Such a publication exists, but we can offer no opinion regarding it. It might be obtained by the usual order from the newsagent.

KATIE.—Certainly New York is a good place for business. We might almost venture to say that it is one of the best in the world. There will we think be little risk in going out there.

MEMOR.—1. He would hardly be called mechanic. He would be called a skilled labourer. 2. An earth-worker or agriculturalist. 3. None except such as are attended with great danger.

J. W. C.—The reading you mention about the blanket distribution meeting was not taken from Dickens, and is therefore not to be found in his works. It was taken from one of the weekly serials.

A CONSTANT READER.—1. Take some aperient medicine. 2. Wash the head frequently and you might advantageously also bathe it in a decoction to be made from the common but useful herb, rosemary. Physical debility is often a great cause of what you have mentioned.

F. G. B.—Shakespeare was married at 18; Dante, Franklin and Bulwer at 24; Kepler, Mozart and Walter Scott at 26; Washington, Napoleon I., and Byron at 27; Rossini, the first time at 30, and the second time at 54; Schiller and Weber at 51; Aristophanes at 53; Wellington at 37; Talma at 39; Luther at 42; Addison at 44; Young at 47; Swift at 49; Buffon at 53, and Goethe at 57.

EUSTACE.—A Committee for a National Volunteer Rifle Meeting, appointed at Hythe August 1st, 1859, was dissolved October 29th, and the National Rifle Association for the encouragement of volunteer rifle corps and the promotion of rifle shooting throughout Great Britain was established at a meeting held at the "Thatched House Tavern," St. James's, November 16th, 1859. Lord Herbert (Sidney Herbert), first president of the association, resigned that office February 16th, 1861. The annual meetings have been held at Wimbledon.

J. D. R.—You might address your inquiry to some foreign and linguistic bookseller. Study modern Greek by preference, or, as you, adopting a popular misconception, are pleased to call it, Romaine. By the way the Greek language has always been Greek; and the literary Greek of the Athens of to-day is much nearer the ancient Greek than our English is to the English of Chaucer. The best grammar for present Greek is the one by Sophokles—an American book costing some five or six shillings. You might also purchase newspapers written in the language. There are numerous Arabic and Turkish grammars; but you will find our advice the best.

B. H. B.—Thanks for your lines on the "Burning Ship," which however we are unable to use. The versification is neat and even creditable, but the sentiment is commonplace, and some of the expressions seem inapplicable. To talk of the awful "form" of the rolling, boisterous billows is not poetic enough. Rapid succession sets aside the idea of form in such a supposed connection. We must remind you that yields and feels are quite incorrect as rhymes. "From a boy on its bosom bean" is incorrect grammar; a pronoun and a verb are lacking. With practice, study and attention you will succeed by-and-by. But though it is true that a poet is born, not made, still the mechanical part of poetry requires most careful consideration.

THE THREE GRACES.—Yes, of material use to study French, and that moreover can be done for the most part without the assistance of a master. Hundreds of people constantly acquire French by self-tuition. You would require some friend to give you a little assistance as to the correct pronunciation; and for the rest you may advantageously go on as follows: 1. Get Hall's First French Course and the Key to it, using the Key only to see if the exercises are done correctly. These books will serve as Grammar, Exercises and Vocabulary in one. They would last you as an initiatory course for six months—they provided you study, say, two hours daily. 3. After that get DeBille's Grammar and Key, and Contaneau's larger dictionary, and go on as before—reading along with them some good author such as Telemachus or Voltaire's "Charles the Twelfth." At this stage too you might get an occasional French newspaper. In the course of a year you ought to be able to translate French fairly. To speak it freely is quite another matter; get a dialogue book, try to get into the company of French

people, or, best of all, get some one to escort you to Paris if only for a week or two. The course we have prescribed would however give you a thorough mastery of French for purposes of ordinary translation.

COCOON.—Some interesting particulars in reference to the subject have been published by the Italian silk-worm breeder, Chiapello, who was lately enabled to travel in Japan, and visit the silk districts of Boshio, seldom entered by Europeans. It appears that Chiapello was greatly surprised by the almost complete want of mulberry trees. All mulberry plantations in that silk-producing province are hedges formed along irrigation canals, sixty to seventy centimetres distant from each other; the single bushes are separated by a distance of from forty to forty-five centimetres. Great care is taken in properly manuring and watering these bushes till the fifth year. The Japanese consider the leaves from bushes four to five years old the best food for those worms which are preserved for propagation, especially for those coming from the region watered by the rivers F'suama and Sirosas. Besides the usual manure from the land generally, they give to each bush from time to time a few spoonfuls of finer compost, especially one prepared from a fish guano. The colour of the eggs is said to be influenced by the kind of manure used; the latter, as well as the degree of manuring, is also stated to affect the produce. This extreme care as to the food of the silkworm is a striking feature in the silkworm culture of the Japanese, which contrasts sharply with the carelessness practised in this respect by European growers. The same care is observed in choosing animals for propagation, and a peculiar method is employed for selecting the strongest, consisting in temporarily exposing the cocoons to the influence of cold, whereby the weaker ones naturally die off. Another characteristic in Japanese silkworm-breeding is that twice the room is given to each worm which is allowed for it in Europe. The detection of diseased animals is also worthy of notice. If a reddish point appears on the head, the worm is killed. Some districts have for centuries been famous for the excellence of their silkworms, and their eggs are largely used in Japan for propagation.

OUT WITH THE TIDE.

Chill and murk the twilight falls,
As the tide streams out to the bay,
Come close to my side, oh faithful one!
And kiss me again, I pray;
For my life is ebbing along with the tide—
Ebbing and passing away.

Fling wide the lattice—the sunset one,
That looks on the open sea;
I love to hear the plaintive waves,
Which ever seem calling to me;
Now take our babe from his cradle soft,
And place him upon your knee.

How lovely he looks, with the dainty flush,
Like a sea-shell's tint, on his cheek!
Our lives have been happy, have they not?
Though poor, we were gentle and meek.
Nay, do not cry! I grieve to see
Those tears on a manly cheek.

Place him back in his little crib;
Though never again he may see
The light of love in these fading eyes,
He will not be far from me;
I shall nightly guard his gentle sleep,
And keep him pure and free.

Now raise me up on your massive arm,
That has toiled for us both so long.
Kiss me again, and let me watch
The dark waves sweep along.
And hear the voice of the night wind come
With its sad and dirge-like song.

Out with the tide!—afar, afar—
But not to an unknown sea;
For, look! the lighthouse now is lit,
And its lamps are flashing free.
Out with the tide! but not, dear love,
Not always away from thee.

H. H.

LOUISE C., eighteen, brown hair and eyes, Mt. Zin., wishes to correspond with a gentlemanly-looking young man, about twenty-one; a clerk preferred.

AMY S., seventeen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, wishes to correspond with a gentleman not more than twenty-five.

ANNIE, medium height, gray eyes, chestnut hair, very domesticated, affectionate, and able to keep a home comfortable.

ALFRED W., nineteen, and a compositor, wishes to correspond with a pretty young lady about seventeen, and connected with the stage.

R. E., twenty-one, medium height, dark, considered good looking, easy tempered, domesticated, and affectionate.

IDA, nineteen, rather tall, fair complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, good tempered, and affectionate; a tradesman's daughter.

BESS, eighteen, tall, cheerful, and fond of home. Respondent must be affectionate, and loving; a mechanic preferred.

ANNIE, nineteen, fair complexion, brown hair and eyes, and of a loving disposition, would make a careful little wife. Respondent must be about twenty-one, tall, dark, and a teetotaler.

EVA, twenty-eight, average height, dark, considered good looking, good figure, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a respectable tradesman's son, about thirty.

LIZA, twenty-two, medium height, dark complexion, domestic servant, loving, affectionate, has a little money, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be about her own age.

DOLLY, twenty-four, tall, and fair, would make a loving and affectionate wife. Respondent must be about twenty-five, tall, fair, handsome, affectionate, in a good position, and fond of home.

TOTTY F., eighteen, fair complexion, light-brown hair, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman, handsome, in a fair business,

and fond of home and children; a native of London preferred.

FLORENCE P., twenty-two, tall, fair, and is a cook, would like to correspond with a tall young man, of a loving disposition, fond of home, and age from twenty-four to thirty; a policeman preferred.

J. L., twenty-one, Mt. Zin., fair, brown hair, and considered good looking. Respondent must be about the same age, loving, affectionate, good tempered, and domesticated.

BILL, LOS LIZ, twenty-five, medium height, dark-brown hair, and a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about twenty, loving, domesticated, and fond of home.

BELLA, twenty-one, tall, dark, good looking, affectionate, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, affectionate, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

L. J., twenty-one, dark-brown hair, loving, and would make a good husband. Respondent must be about nineteen, handsome, domesticated, affectionate, and fond of music.

LOTTIE S., twenty-three, dark, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-seven, tall, dark complexion, of a loving disposition, and fond of home and children.

BILL W., twenty-five, tall, fair, handsome, and loving, would like to correspond with a young lady who is pretty, available, able to make a home comfortable, fond of home and music.

W. T., twenty-five, light-brown hair, handsome, and of a loving nature, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty-three, pretty, loving, domesticated, and fond of home comforts.

W. M., twenty-three, tall, considered pretty, well educated, and fond of home and children. Respondent must be tall, handsome, loving, affectionate, fond of home, and about her own age; a mechanic preferred.

JERRY S., twenty-two, average height, dark-brown hair, blue eyes, gipsy complexion, in a good position, and accomplished, would like to correspond with a young man about her own age; a tradesman preferred.

CALLY, twenty, light-gray eyes, dark hair, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, well connected, affectionate, and fond of singing.

G. W., twenty-three, Mt. Zin., dark complexion, handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty-one, pretty, well educated, affectionate, and very fond of home; a carpenter preferred.

J. H., twenty, affectionate, handsome, and would make a good wife to a loving and affectionate husband. Respondent must be about twenty-three, dark, handsome, fond of home and home comforts.

TILLY, seventeen, tall, dark, affectionate, domesticated, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty, tall, dark, handsome, fair complexion, affectionate, and of a loving disposition.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JOHNAT E. is responded to by—"Natalie," twenty-one, rather dark, very loving, fond of home, and children, a good cook, perfectly capable of keeping a home clean.

ELIZABETH G. M. by—"Nancy," twenty, fair, loving, and domesticated.

ALBERT by—"E. N.," twenty-four, Mt. Zin., fond of home, and affectionate.

EMERSON by—"Carnotacus," a professional gentleman in a Government office.

JOHN G. M. by—"Lucy," good looking, fond of home and children, and domesticated.

JAMES would like to hear more of "J. G.," as she thinks he would suit admirably.

ANNE by—"Loving Charity," he thinks he is all she can wish for.

DOWNS HEARTED ALY by—"Minnie R.," dark, well educated, and respectably connected.

EMERSON by—"Sarah Lucy," twenty-two, accomplished, domesticated, light-brown hair, and blue eyes.

B. H. S. by—"Folly," good looking, and very fond of the water.

HARVEY W. by—"Sarah L.," twenty-five, tall, fair, good looking, able to keep a home clean, and wishes to live in America.

HAPPY JACK by—"Fern," twenty-one, dark-brown hair, medium height, merry, domesticated, and very loving.

ALFRED by—"Mariolizza," twenty-two, dark gray eyes, dark-brown hair, very fond of home and children, and would make a very good wife.

A. B. G. by—"Maria R.," nineteen, dark complexion, tall, hazel eyes, considered good looking, and thoroughly domesticated.

THOMAS B. by—"Agnes W.," a housemaid, nineteen, fair complexion, auburn hair, hazel eyes, and fond of home.

G. M. by—"Emmie," eighteen, tall, dark, gray eyes, considered very good looking, and merry, loving disposition.

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